

THE
Retired Christian

Exercised in
Divine Thoughts,
AND
Heavenly Meditations,
FOR THE
CLOSET:

With a suitable
PRAYER for each MEDITATION.

By THOMAS KEN, D.D.
Late Lord Bishop of *Bath and Wells*.

*In omnibus requiem quæſivi, ſed non inveni, niſi
ſeorſim ſedens in angulo cum Libello.*

Thomas à Kempis.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

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BOOKS

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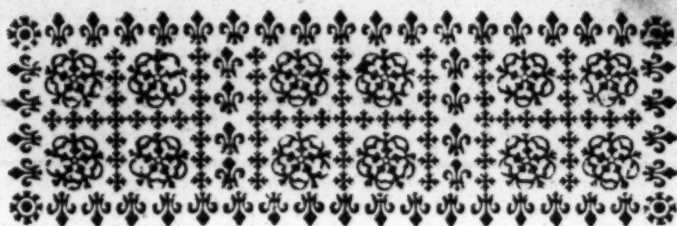
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T H E
RETIRED CHRISTIAN.

Of SOLITUDE.

WHEN I sadly look upon the many Years I have already lived, and spent in Idleness, or Recreations, or the Business of this World, and consider how few of them have been employ'd upon the great Concern of another, I cannot but wonder what I have been doing, and how I have spent so great a Portion of my Time.

Surely then 'tis now at length high Time to consider the End of my being sent hither, which was not thus eagerly to look after the Comforts and Enjoyments of the World, and set up my Rest and Habitation

A

tation here, but to fit myself for a Life of Glory, and to prepare for the eternal Enjoyment of my God.

When I take a serious View of my Life past, I cannot but wish (instead of Luxury and vain Delights) it had been all laid out in the sincere Practice of Piety and Devotion. However, since I have been hitherto careless in the Duties of Religion, and too shamefully negligent of that Happiness Above, for which I was originally design'd, I will now, before it be too late, endeavour, if possible, to retrieve the Loss, and try if I can bid adieu to those sensual Pleasures, and worldly Trifles, which of themselves will very shortly bid adieu to me.

Retire therefore, O my Soul, from the busy World, and employ thyself about that for which thou wert created, *viz.* the Contemplation of thy God. I will hasten to my Closet, or yonder solitary Walk, and there, sequestred from the vexatious World, I will not suffer a single Thought of it to approach me, unless by way of Pity and Contempt. The World
and

and I are fallen out, and parted; and methinks this solitary Place becomes a banish'd Man, whose Company is in no wise suitable to the greatest Part of Mankind, and such whose Humour and Gaiety agrees not with the Depth of Meditation, and the melancholy Prospect of another World.

How delightful is it, O my Soul, for thee to enjoy this sweet Communion with thy God, and thus to dwell upon divine Objects! I am here safe and at Rest in this dear Place of Quiet, and earnestly pity all the Men of Business and Hurry, whose Heads are full of perplexing Contrivances, to procure a little Happiness in a World where there is no such thing.

O ye Kings and Emperors! did ye but concieve the spiritual Sweetness of this devout Privacy, and the ravishing Delights of these serene Hours of Contemplation, you wou'd quickly lay aside your troublesome Greatness, and exchange your Grandeur for the calm Delights of this

retired Silence, and instead of an ambitious Pursuit after Glory here, and the Enlargement of your Crowns, you would choose to meditate on the Greatness of a heavenly Kingdom, and the Glories of an immortal Crown.

How pleasant, O God, is this Retirement, where thou vouchsafest thy Presence to crown the Delight, and reward my Banishment from the World! Farewel then ye nauseous and deceitful Pleasures; farewel ye Riches, and all your alluring Trifles, ye shall no longer hold me, for I will break the Chains of my Slavery, and fly to my Redeemer, whose Invitations I can no longer resist, and whose embracing Arms are spread wide open to receive me. O blessed Freedom! O charming Solitude! I will grasp you, I will hold you fast, the Delights of Silence and Retreat! I will no more leave this my *Canaan* for the Flesh-Pots of *Egypt*: I am now happily escaped from three cruel Task-Masters, the World, the Devil, and the Flesh; and shall I return and be a Slave again? Didst thou
ever,

ever, O my Soul, find that Calmness in the midst of Business and Hurry; that Freedom in Quarrels and Vexation; that Complacency in Disputes and Wranglings; that Peace in Passions and Disturbances; and, in a Word, that Quiet and Serenity in the noisy World, which, in this close Retreat, and in these ravishing Contemplations, do now entertain my delighted Thoughts? Here I can unburthen my Soul, and pour it out before my God. Here I can wrestle with the Powers of Heaven, and not let them go till I have obtain'd a Blessing. Here I can confess my Sins, and with Hopes of Comfort, lay open my troubled Breast before the merciful Hearer of my Prayers. Here I can with the deepest Humility implore his Pity, with my Cries call down his Mercy, and with my penitent Tears disarm him, and dispel the Storms of that Anger, which would otherwise consume me. Here I can clearly perceive the Poverty of the Rich and Honourable, who are busy in exchanging their Sal-

vation for a Trifle. I can here divest myself of the Errors and false Lights that lead the Worldling into wrong Conceptions of a Life of Piety and Humiliations, and can easily now perceive the real Happiness of the despised Followers of the suffering *Jesus* : I can now discover more Beauty and Loveliness in pious Rags, than I could ever find in all the glittering Follies of the Proud.

O ye blessed, ye retired Hours ! why fly ye so swift away ? Why so hasty to be gone ? Are ye then like other Pleasures, short and transient ? O that ye were eternal, that I might have my Fill of Quietness, and be perpetually thus sequestred from the vain Converse of busy Men ! But since these happy Hours, and my Life itself is very short, I will make the best of it, and employ it all in the Pleasures of thinking and doing well.

O, my Lord, what need was there that thou shouldest command me to enter into my Closet ? The Delights which attend the Enjoyment of thee,
my

my God, in private, and the Contemplations of thy Beauty, are surely inviting enough to oblige me not only to enter into my Closet, but to stay me there fix'd and unmov'd, and wholly taken up with thy Glories. O ye mighty Men, ye Rich, ye Honourable, ye Worldlings, all come hither and taste but one Hour's Enjoyment of a solitary Communion with the Almighty, and you will soon forsake your Glories, your Titles, and all your earthly Interests, and quickly be enamour'd with the Lives of the retir'd Saints, who have wisely left the Chase after Riches and Pleasures here, to pursue immortal Crowns of Glory ready for them at the end of their short and happy Race!

Consider, O my Soul, thy dear Redeemer in his forty Days Retirement in the Wilderness: He was tempted, indeed, but he overcame, and how glorious was the Triumph! the Angels came and ministred unto him. 'Twas a great Appearance! but he that forsakes the Conversation of the World, is a Companion only

fit for Angels, whose Time is like his, employ'd in the Contemplation of their great Creator. Think upon thy Saviour, O my Soul, when he went up into a Mountain by himself to pray, and continued all Night in Prayer to God. Here was my Lord in Solitude: He chose the private Recesses of a Mountain to offer up his Prayer to his Father, that heareth in Secret. What sacred Gusts of a high Devotion inspired his heavenly Soul in his Retirement? Where, secure from the officious Crowd of Admirers, and the disturbing World, he cou'd more freely enjoy the blessed Presence of the Deity, and an uninterrupted Converse with his Father and blessed Spirit.

What lively and sensible Enjoyments of God's Presence, O my Soul, have blessed the Solitudes of retir'd Saints! Thus devout and heavenly *Daniel*; thus fervent *Peter*; thus *John* the beloved Disciple of my Lord; thus all the inspired Prophets, Apostles, and blessed Saints and Hermits, were taken up with Visions of
Glory,

Glory, and Scenes of their future Happiness, even before they put on Immortality.

How delightful and ardent were the Raptures? How blessed, how comfortable, were the Communications of God, which entertain'd their heavenly Souls in their private Meditations, and retir'd Prayers? How distant were they from the Spirit of the World, whilst they neglected and despised the Grandeur of it, to meditate and converse with their God in Private? But their Labour was not Loss; for no sooner had they abandon'd the World, but God requited them with Fore-tastes of the Joys above, and sent them an Earnest of those unutterable Glories which they now enjoy. O great Reward of Solitude! may I be ever thus secluded from the World, and pretended Happiness of it, so I might enjoy a close and vigorous Communion with my dear Redeemer!

What is there upon Earth, O my Soul, that may tempt thee to forego this welcome Privacy, and the Happi-

ness which I here enjoy, retir'd from the Conversation of the World? Whatever Company I come into, the usual Subject of the Discourse is trifling and empty. The Time's thrown away about News, and idle Surmises of Men; about the State, or about a dull Discourse of improving Wealth, and all the fordid Maxims of heaping up, and becoming rich here, and for ever miserable hereafter. The Men of Pleasure shall have a long Harangue about the Sport to which they are most addicted, and please themselves with a Description of the Pleasure which takes up most of that Time that, God knows, was given them for another End. Our Ladies and men of Gallantry shall talk very eagerly of the newest Fashions, and loudly boast of their own Impertinencies. Alas! they are all out of the Way: None of all this, O my Soul, will bring thee nearer to thy God: *Come not thou into their Secret, unto their Assembly, mine Honour, be not thou united.*

Now,

Now, can Men that have any Thought of Heaven, and the blessed Mansions there, that have Souls great and noble enough to converse with Angels and God himself, can they stoop to such Conversation, such Company, such Discourse as this? And yet this is generally such as the World affords. Take it then, ye Worldlings, and hold it fast; I'll rob you of none of it, but from this Moment I retire to my Closet, and my God, and thence I banish you, all ye earthly Thoughts, and charge ye not to disturb my Soul in heavenly Converse, in her Contemplations of the Saints above, and the Folly and the Madness of the World below.

Dear Saviour, how distant from the Truth are Mens Conceptions of the retir'd Followers of thy Life, and of thy Cross, as if they led an useless and insignificant Life, and pass'd away their Time without any Benefit to the World? But are the Prayers, and daily Intercessions of these heavenly Recluses no ways benefi-

cial to avert the Judgments of God from consuming the careless World for its Iniquities? Take them out of their Cells and Oratories, and see if they are not disposed to the Practice of the severest, and the most heroick Virtues of the Christian Life. None triumph over afflictions with a nobler Courage; none despise the Crosses and Hardships of the severest Trials, or undergo the Miseries of Poverty, and all the Difficulties of the Cross, with a more primitive Zeal, than these constant Followers of their suffering Lord. Great Saints on Earth! how happy are the Lives ye lead? How dear in the Sight of God are your Tears of Penitence, and the solitary Sighs with which you pierce the merciful Ears of that Saviour whose Steps ye follow, and with whom ye daily converse? O that I might be admitted a Partner in your holy Solitude! that I might have Grace to reach the celestial Contemplations that entertain your aspiring Soul! How glad, O God, should I be to be inspir'd, if not with their
pro-

profound Piety and happy Employments, yet at least with a due Reverence to these blessed Saints? If I cannot soar up to their Perfections, let me, however, with the humble Woman in sacred Writ, be a Servant to wash the Feet of the Servants of the Lord.

The P R A Y E R.

O My God, let the Consideration of the Emptiness of Pleasures, the Troubles and Misery of Riches, and the Shortness and Vanity of all Things in the World, inspire me with due Contempt of all Enjoyments here below; and make me ever fly these Hindrances to a Life of Holiness and Virtue, that I may with the greater Freedom enjoy thee, O my God, in meditating on thy Perfections, and thy Glories: Let me, dearest *Jesus*, have those Influences of thy blessed Spirit in my Retirements, that I may at last grow wholly weary of the World, and then fix my Thoughts upon that heavenly Kingdom, where
true

true Pleasures, Fulness of Riches, and lasting Honours are only to be met withal; whether let thy Mercy speedily bring me, that I may be satisfied with the Fulness of thy Presence, and meditate for ever on thy great Perfections, joining with all the glorious Attendants on thy Throne in endless Songs of thy eternal Praises, *Amen.*

Of our Saviour's Love to us.

SINCE then, my Soul, thou hast left the World, and settled thy Delight upon this heavenly Solitude, let us now contemplate on thy Saviour, and consider the Wonders of his adorable Love. For what can be more apt to raise my aspiring Thoughts above the World, or add to the Delights of this dear Retirement, than the Contemplation of divine Charity, and the immense Love by which I have been redeemed, and hope hereafter to be saved? Sure such Love as this is worth thinking

thinking on, and Gratitude as well as Pleasure should enflame my Soul with a Desire to meditate on the astonishing Love of the Saviour of the World: But where shall I begin? I doubt I have undertaken a Task too mighty for me, for his Love was from Eternity, and had no Beginning: However, I will venture to contemplate the dear Affection of my Lord, who will pardon the Defects of my groveling Thoughts; for they can never reach the least Act, much less the Eternity, of his Love.

See, O my Soul, the fatal Effect of the Tempter's Malice! Lo, the forbidden Fruit is down, 'tis eaten, *and we are past Recovery!* See the pale, the ghastly Look of thy undone Parents, how the guilty Rebels fly the Face of their offended Maker! What hast thou done? says their angry God, and then denounced their dismal Sentence, which condemns them first to Banishment, and then to Death. But is there not a Remedy, is there not a Reprieve? must the Doom be irreversibile, and the Death

Death eternal? Is there no Favourite in the Court of Heaven to intercede and stave off the Anger of their offended Lord? Must our Blood, must our Lives, pay for this Offence? And must the Justice of God be satisfied for this Contempt and Violation of his great Command? There must, I see there must, be a bloody Sacrifice; but then where is the Lamb for a Burnt-offering? See yonder, O my Soul! turn thy Eyes to the great Court of Heaven, see there the Deity itself suing out thy Pardon!

Behold the Lamb there that taketh away the Sins of the whole World! The very King himself whom thou hast contemned, the King whose Command was violated, will not only seal thy Pardon, but, to redeem thee, and satisfy offended Justice, will subject himself to Sufferings and Death. It is determined, O my Soul, that the Second Person in the Glorious Godhead should leave his Throne and Kingdom, to take upon him both the Guilt and dreadful Punishment of thy Sins. O my God! O Sacred Trinity!

Trinity! O Mercy itself, unbounded Mercy! will God himself come down and die? Will no meaner an Offering be accepted? Will not an Angel's, not the beloved *Gabriel's* Blood (should he take our Nature on this great Occasion) yea will not the Incarnation and Death of the whole Host of Heaven atone for this? But must God himself come down and bleed? Ye Angels, ye blessed Seraphims, and all the glorious Spirits above, why do ye not offer to redeem the Redeemer of the World? Why do ye not all desire to become Flesh and Blood, and then pour it out on so many Crosses, rather than to suffer God to become a Sacrifice to himself? O my Soul! it must not be; an Angel, yea all the Heavenly Choir are too mean for this mighty Work, they are scarcely able so much as to penetrate into this grand Mystery of thy Redemption. Since then, dear Saviour of the ruined World, 'tis thy Pleasure, and thy Love, thus to appease the Wrath of God, O suffer me to contemplate, to
admire

admire thy Love; that Love which I cannot express.

Consider, O my Soul, thy Saviour now incarnate; for by this Time his unbounded Love has made him leave his blessed Seat of Glory, and has placed him in the wretched World, and here his whole Life was Love; he went about doing Good, *i. e.* he went about doing Acts of Love: How full of divine Charity was the first Appearance of his heavenly Life in Publick? From that Time Jesus began to preach, saying, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; thus to warn the sleepy World, and snatch it from its approaching Ruin, was the first and main Concern of my Lord, and was the tenderest Instance of a God-like Love; *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* O dead, O stupid World! I have left yonder high Regions of Bliss on purpose to warn you, and to turn away the impending Vengeance of my offended Father. Slight not then my Kindness, but repent, if not for fear of his

his Displeasure, yet at least in requital of my Love.

The next Account of thy Lord, O my Soul, is his preaching on the Mount; where we find him busy in instructing his Followers in the Practice of Divine Love, with which he concludes his holy Sermon there; *Love your Enemies; do good to them that hate you.* This was the true Spirit of Love indeed; and we may well obey this holy Precept, O my Lord, since thou hast set such an Example, and hast been so exact a Pattern in the highest Acts of Love to thy most bitter Enemies.

Thou didst cure Diseases; thou didst cast out Devils; thou didst exhort, and with the greatest Earnestness intreat Sinners to be saved; thou didst call down Blessings, and avert Judgments, and all this for thy Murderers! This was such Love, as thou thy Self art the only Example of since the World began: To give Sight to the Blind, Hearing to the Deaf, Strength and Soundness to the Diseased, and Comfort to the Afflicted,
were

were the daily Acts of his boundless Love : This, my Soul, was the Life of God ; thus was his Love manifested before the great and dreadful Instance of it at his Death, which thou art now to reflect upon, for it is near.

What tender Rhetorick does the Heavenly Jesus use to persuade his Disciples to mutual Love, from the Consideration of his own? *Love one another, as I loved you. As the Father loved me, so have I loved you ; continue ye in my Love.* And again, *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you :* Thus earnest was my dear Redeemer to remind his Followers of the Greatness of his Love before he left them, and finish'd his mighty Work upon the Cross.

Come then, my Soul, draw near and consider the Agonies of thy Saviour's Love, when he endured the Weight of his Father's Anger, to the Death, to purchase for thee a Crown of Life.

Behold, *Judas* approaches with a Kiss of Treachery to betray his God ;
certainly.

certainly, my Lord, thou canst not but resent this, as an unnatural Baseness in thine own Disciple, thus to murder thee with a Kiss; yes, my Soul, see how the Lord resents this horrid Affront to his sacred Person; and *Jesus* said unto him, *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* O, my Lord, didst thou vouchsafe to call him Friend, after such Usage at his bloody Hands? Did he indeed deserve such an endearing Word from thy sacred Lips, whilst he was employed in so black a Piece of Treachery? Astea this, heavenly *Peter*, encouraged by a hasty Zeal, wounded one of those that came to seize his Lord; but the Love of *Jesus* was as great as *Peter's* Zeal, and quickly healed the Wound. Such an Example of divine Pity might have stopt the Fury of the Crowd: But these are only Preliminaries to the great and dreadful Scene of Love which follows.

For my Lord is hurried away to the Court, and there amidst all the Indignities of an insolent Rabble, his tender

Of our Saviour's

tender Love and Meekness were as conspicuous as their Malice; for he suffered himself to be led as a Lamb to the Slaughter; and as a Sheep before the Sheerers is dumb, so opened he not his Mouth.

Ascend, O my Soul, to Golgotha, the fatal Mount of Love; go thither with thy condemned Lord; for behold they now lead him to the dismal Place, to try if the Prospect of a cruel Death can wear away his Patience, and tire out his Love. O, my God, whither will thy Love 'carry thee? Hast thou not then already given sufficient Tokens of thy endearing Kindness to the Sons of Men? But must thou still go on to suffer the Tortures of a bitter Death, to convince us of it?

The farther I ascend in this amazing Consideration of thy Love to the ungrateful World, the more does the Wonder croud in upon my full charged Thoughts. O the Burthen of thy Love! Give, O God, give a suitable Capacity to my labouring Thoughts, or I shall be overwhelm'd
and

and quickly lost in the Contem-
plation of thy Love, in thy dolo-
rous Passion. See, my ravished Soul,
thy Lord is even now appeasing the
dreadful Anger of the Deity, and re-
conciling his offended Father to the
sinful World! See his very Posture
on the Cross, is a lively Representa-
tion of his Love; his Arms are there
extended forth, if the fastning Nails
would but suffer him and give scope
to the Fervour of his Love! Behold
the Streams of Love trickle down the
precious Wounds, and he is now
bleeding out his Love at his Hands
and his pierced Feet! The Sluices
of God's Love are open; stick fast,
stick close, my thirsty Soul, to these
deep Wounds of attractive Love!
Take in the precious Juice, and let
none fall aside! Embrace, embrace,
thy bleeding Lord, and expire with
him in an Act of Love! Ye scarlet
Drops of my Redeemer's Love, di-
stil upon my Soul! Let me here be
fixed under these dear Wounds, O
my God! For the Contemplation of
this Love is Heaven, 'tis Heaven,
and

and I will have no other! Retreat,
O my Soul, in time retreat, and trust
thy self no longer to the Heat with
which this Wonder doth inspire thee.
A deep Contemplation of God's Love
upon the Cross, will end in a passion-
ate Ferment of amazing Thoughts.
A too near Approach to his flaming
Love, will (with the Zeal of fervent
David) burn thee up. Since then,
my Lord and my God, thy Love in
these thy Sufferings is so great, that
I durst not presume to reach it by
Expression, let me ever admire it
with a due Terror, and a silent Re-
verence. O blessed Thief upon the
Cross, who didst partake of the
Bounty of his dying Love, *This Day*
shalt thou be with me in Paradise!
The bitter Pains he felt; the Re-
proaches and Disturbance of the
clamorous Multitude; the Shame of
his ignominious Sufferings, and all
the dismal Circumstances of Horror
that did surround his dejected Soul,
could not stop the Force of his Love
to this blessed Convert; *Father, forgive*
them, for they know not what they do.
How

How diffused is the Love of *Jesus*? For us to forgive an Injury, tho' done by chance, is accounted Great and Generous ; but to forgive that which is done out of Spite and Malice, is the Top of Perfection, and but few do reach it. But these Murtherers were such as had before tasted of the Love of Christ, and yet they requite him with a cruel and infamous Death : But neither the Thoughts of this, nor the Smart of his wounded Body, no nor yet the Continuance of their Malice, could hinder his amazing Love from intreating his Father in behalf of these bloody Wretches. Hence learn, my Soul, to imitate his high Pattern of thy Saviour's Love, in forgiving the utmost Injuries of thy bitter Enemies. But now behold my Lord expires ; but is his Life finish'd? Yes, O my Soul, the Life indeed of thy Lord is finish'd, but not his Love : O boundless Love, that dies not with the Lover ! God is dead ; but lo, he revives, and is quick and vigorous as ever ; for consider, O my Soul, the

B

tender

tender Care and Expressions of his Love: After his glorious Resurrection from the Grave, he assured his Disciples, that *that he would not leave them comfortless*; and he seems in haste to perform it; in the midst of a sorrowful Assembly he appears, and immediately blesses them with a tender Salutation of his Love; *Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, so send I you*; and then he breathed on them, and said unto them, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose Sins ye remit, they are remitted, &c.* O blessed Apostles of the Son of God, who had the Spirit of his Love thus shed abroad on their enlarged Hearts! O happy Christian World! happy indeed, if not ungrateful: How great was this Love of your Redeemer, to leave this Power with the Ministers of his Love, to absolve their penitent Souls from the Burthen of those Sins which would render you Objects of eternal Sufferings!

The PRAYER.

O God, my Saviour and my Lord, Grant, I beseech thee, that the Contemplations of thy dear Love may ever inspire my inflamed Heart with the most zealous Return of Love to thee, my God, and with the most fervent Charity to all the Members of thy holy Church, whether they are my Friends or my causeless Enemies. O let me never by the Coldness of my Affection to my Neighbours and Fellow-Christians, make me unworthy of that Love of thine which has now employed my Meditations; and since without Charity, no other Virtue or religious Duty is acceptable in thy Sight, let it be my daily Exercise to attain it, that at length I may be a perfect Proficient in the School of Love, and my humble Soul may breathe out nothing else, that no Provocation or Affronts of the most wilful Malice may ever stir up in me the Spirit of Revenge, or abate my Charity; but let this ce-

28 *The Joys of Heaven.*

lestial Fire of heavenly Love ever
burn in my fervent Breast upon
Earth, till 'tis perfected at last in
the blessed Regions of eternal Love.
Amen.

The Joys of Heaven.

WHY art thou so timorous, O
my Soul? Why thus fearful
to approach the darling Glories that
are above? I know thou canst never,
with the utmost Elevation of thy
Thoughts, reach the least of those
Joys which it never entered into the
Heart of Man to conceive: An in-
spired Apostle has confessed his In-
capacity to describe them; much
less can it ever be expected that I,
with this earthly Tabernacle about
me, should raise my Meditation so
high, as to shadow out the smallest
Enjoyment of that Kingdom of eter-
nal Glory. I will entertain myself
however (tho' at this mighty distance)
with a Prospect of the heavenly *Ca-*
naan; and as far as my shallow Ca-
pacity

capacity gives me leave, will enjoy the promised Land before my Entrance thither. Mount then, my Soul, and, winged with thy most aspiring Thoughts, take thy Flight to the Borders of Glory, and thence look down with Pity on the rich and honourable Worms below!

Where am I, O my Soul? Into what Paradise hast thou brought me! Surely this is none other than the House, even the Palace of God! O the Brightness, the glorious Lustre of this Place! this is doubtless the heavenly City, into which the divine and beloved Apostle was taken, and which he saw, and has described in his great Vision of revealed Glories. What he mystically spoke of the flourishing Church on Earth, belongs to this glorious Place without a Figure; here needs no Candle, nor the Light of the Sun; for the least of all these numerous Spirits here, is bright enough to enlighten a whole World of *Egyptian* Darkness. If the spacious Sky were covered, from one End to the other, with the brighter

Stars, and every Star were a thousand times bigger, more clear and sparkling than ever yet was seen, this would indeed be a glorious Sight; but yet it all comes, beyond expression, short of the Beauties of the lowest Mansion in this heavenly Kingdom. Behold the Splendor of the Throne of God!

But retreat, my Soul, to the Contemplation of the other Glories here, more suitable to thy weak and dazzled Faculties. Presume not too far, nor dwell too long upon this tremendous Object. Thou wilt be quickly lost here; retire therefore and approach not too near this awful Seat of Glory, about which thou seest there the distant Angels lie prostrate in the humblest Postures of Respect and Fear.

O my Soul! what blessed Company is this? Here are Millions of Angel-like Spirits, no less bright and glorious than the Sun. Seraphims, Arch-angels, Patriarchs! O glorious Host of Heaven! how ravishing is this great Society! how splendid each

each Angel-like Look appears! What acute and piercing Rays of Glory dart from each flaming Countenance in this sacred Crowd! Ye illustrious Kings, crown'd Emperors of Glory, how dazzling is your Lustre! how high and inexpressible is this celestial Grandeur!

O ye noble Army of Martyrs! I congratulate your Sufferings here, and your immortal Crowns, the great Rewards of Blood and Tortures. There see, O my Soul, behold the illustrious Crown of Martyrdom on the sacred Head of heavenly *Stephen*, their blessed Martyr! How happy wert thou to submit that encircled Head of Glory, to be here bruised and mangled by the sharp and bloody Stones! Behold, there stands, there sings, the glorified *Isaiab*, shining among the first and highest Order of blessed Spirits. Great Prophet! thou wert here cruelly sawn asunder, yet not thou, but thy Body only, and lo! now thy Abasement and bloody Sufferings are turned into Triumphs of the highest Splendor. Thou didst

purchase that eternal Diadem, at the easy Price of a holy Life, and a few Hours of Torture at thy Death. O happy Exchange! O easy Purchase of everlasting Life! How welcome would my Sufferings be, if Men should take my Body too, this sinful Carcase, away to Flames, Racks, Tortures, any thing, so I might at length enter these heavenly Mansions of endless Happiness, and be admitted to the great Society of this Army of God! O Life, how tedious, how long and burthensome art thou to me, that seriously think upon the Joys of Heaven! Well might St Paul, after his Rapture into the third Heaven, breathe out his passionate Desire to *depart, and be with Christ for ever.*

O ye glorious Company of Apostles! you who here spent both your Time and your Selves in the divine Labours of converting Souls to God; how great is your Reward in Heaven! where ye now enjoy the Compny of so many blessed Converts, whom you preach'd into these Regions

Regions of Bliss and endless Happiness: How well have you *finish'd your Course, and kept the Faith!* And how well are you rewarded with the promised Crown of Righteousness, before laid up for you, and now enjoy'd by you! Holy *Peter*, how noble and god-like is this great Recompense of thy Zeal in the Service of thy dear Lord, whose Praises thou art now setting forth in unutterable Songs of Joy and Gladness! Thou didst deny him indeed, but thou didst also weep bitterly, and now thou art secure both from Sinning and Weeping for ever.

O ye *goodly Fellowship* of the *Prophets!* mysterious, awful, and majestic are the sacred Volumes which you left behind you! but how much greater and more excellent do these inspired Songs of Praises and Hallelujahs seem to be, which now employ your happy Eternity? You were on Earth blessed with heavenly Visions of God, but now you see him as he is. If the Antepast of these Joys were so divine and ravishing, how

inconceivable are the Delights of the Feast itself! Thy Dungeon, great *Jeremy*, is here turned into a glorious Palace, and thy Lamentations into Praises, Songs of the highest Ardour, and heavenly Gust of inexpressible Delight.

O ye sacred Priests of God! you who here lived up to the Rules of your great and holy Function, how great are these Wages for your unwearied Labours in your Master's Vineyard! How happy for you were the Contempt and Reproaches of the sensual World! How dearly kind and friendly has the Scorn and Insolences with which you were treated here below! For they have occasioned these great Rewards of their Pains and Sufferings, that Glory which you there enjoy with the eternal Priest, from whom you received both your Gifts and sacred Orders: O that I might have this certain Character of the true Ambassador of God! that I might thus be made for ever happy, by being exercised with
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the daily Contempts and Abuses of the insolent and haughty World.

O ye primitive Saints, and holy Followers of the Cross! whose Courage and Constancy in the Faith, stemmed the Tide of the most bitter Sufferings; whose Zeal resisted unto Blood, and bravely triumph'd over the exquisite Cruelties of Heathen Emperors, and the most bloody Tyrants: How highly now are your devout and holy Lives and your sharpest Persecutions requited there with these Glories, that encouraged you to an unwearied Perseverance in your Profession? You were inspired with Constancy to your holy Principles, by the Hopes of that very Reward which now crowns all your Sufferings with Victory and everlasting Triumphs.

O ye blessed Poor! and ye that were contemptible in the World! O happy *Lazarus*, whose Sores and Ulcers here were loath'd and scorn'd by the Rich and Wealthy! Thy Condition was despised here below, for thy Coffers were empty of
B 6y Money.

Money, and thou didst want homely Crumbs to satisfy thy craving Stomach: But, O God, what a Change is there! Hail, thou great Saint of eternal Riches and Crown of Glory! great Favourite of Heaven in *Abraham's* Bosom! how am I filled with the deepest Respect of thy Glories! Not more earnest was the Rich Man's damn'd Soul in its Cries for a Drop of Mercy to relieve him in his burning Miseries, than I am to think of thy eternal Splendour, with the most ardent Wishes, that I may undergo thy despised Condition here, and feel all the Misery of thy smarting Sores, to be at length rewarded with the least part of that Happiness wherein thou triumphest there beyond the reach of Malice or Contempt.

Hail, all the despised Followers of the Poverty of *Jesus*! he had no Estate, he had no Purchase on Earth, not a *Hole* wherein to lay his sacred Head. In this you were like your suffering Lord; for your Treasures were in Heaven, where you now enjoy them with an Assurance of an everlasting

everlasting Possession; you are now no longer Heirs, but actual Inheritors of that Kingdom of inexpressible Wealth, from whence he himself has utterly debarred all that are incumbered with Riches here, and place their Security and Reliance on them. What divine Melody is this, O my Soul, which thus charms my ravish'd Thoughts! What vigorous Echoes of Joys unexpressible are these I hear? These can be none other than the Voices of Angels. O the Fervour of this Joy! as if their heavenly Breasts were unable to contain the flaming Zeal within. Lo, how they break forth into the most ardent Expressions, and pathetick Hallelujahs to your Creator's Glory! Hark! what heavenly Song is this I hear! *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! which was, which is, and is to come, Blessing, Honour, Power, and Glory be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever!*

Glorious Psalmists! how inexpressibly glad should I be to bear a Part in
your

your celestial Concert? O my ravish'd Senses! I cannot, I cannot bear the Delights and Transports of these eternal Hymns, even in a distant Contemplation! This continual Singing, and endless Praises, fill the joyful Place, and the whole celestial Palace resounds with the Lauds and Glories of it's King, whose enlightning Presence adds to the divine Harmony of singing Angels; the tuneful Fervours of each single Spirit here, are far beyond the highest Attempts of the most skilful Artists in this World. How sweet then, O how dear and ravishing must so many Thousands of these seraphick Voices be all join'd together, and conspiring in their united Praises and Thanksgivings to the ever sacred Trinity, the adorable Godhead on the Throne! But that, O my Soul, which crowns all my Happiness is, that 'tis all eternal, and shall last for ever and ever. Let me consider what Eternity is; it is for ever. Here I must stop, for I am already puzzled, and can go no farther: Come and help

help me then, all ye Arithmeticians that are throughout the World: Meet all together, and reckon up the Years, the Ages of Eternity. Continue the Work, and ply it with the utmost Diligence, till ye all die, and there be not not a Man of you left to number any more. Now let your innumerable Figures (if possible) be all join'd together and cast up by the succeeding Age: Nay, it cannot be done, there's no casting up this immense Sum. But if it could be done, and all their Figures were put together, and the total Sum cast up, yet they have been all this while labouring in vain, and have not advanced one Step to Eternity; Eternity will not be one Moment nearer to an end after all these Years were past and gone. Ye Angels of God, your Capacities are large, and your Apprehensions wide and capacious; besides you are in the actual Possession of this blessed Eternity; tell me therefore what it is, let your happy Experience prompt you to a ready Answer to this abstruse

struse Question, what is Eternity? and how long shall it last? Alas! they all stand silent; the Question is beyond their Reach; they cannot perform Impossibilities, therefore they can never assign any End to Eternity, because it has none. O Eternity! mysterious Eternity! How great and beyond all Apprehension art thou! How dearly welcome to the blessed Saints in Glory! How desirable art thou, and yet how little thought of! Well may'st thou, O my Soul, despise the dying Pleasures here, and breathe after the Joys above, Joys so desirable as to know no End, never to be at a Conclusion, but be always beginning, always continuing, even for ever and ever! So happy indeed is this Life of Glory, that a whole Age of Torments here, woud be well employ'd in the purchasing the Enjoyment of one Day, one Hour, in those blessed Regions. How well then is a Life of the strictest Purity laid out in the Pursuit of this Happiness, not for a Day, nor an Hour, but for an end-

endless Eternity? I might endeavour, O my Soul, to shadow forth the Excellency of this Life eternal, by considering what it is to live thus happy for ten thousand Millions of Ages, or some such Trifle: But think what I can; add never so many Millions to the Heap, it all signifies nothing; for there's no Comparison, no Proportion, none at all: In a word, it has no End; I can think no farther; and if I cou'd attempt a farther Description of it's infinite Eternity, I should but wander in the Dark till I lost myself.

Thus blessed, and thus long shall the Happy reign in Glory! Why art thou then, O my Soul, constrain'd to *dwell here in Mesech, and to have thy Habitations amongst the Tents of Kedar?* Why must this sinful Clog, this earthly Tabernacle, keep back my aspiring Soul, when it would fain be gone, and fly to the eternal Mansions design'd for it's Abode? Well, since I must be confin'd to this hated World, I will
be

be reveng'd on it, by despising it, and looking on all it's Wealth and Pleasures with the greatest Aversion and Contempt. And altho' it may keep me from these Joys of Heaven for a Time, yet it shall never have so great a Portion of my Heart, as to shut me out for ever. I will wait till my Change comes; and altho' my Journey may seem long, as well as difficult, yet the Glories of the continuing City at the end of it, shall support me by the Way, and inspire me with an unwearied Resolution, in my Race, till I win the prize, the glorious Prize above, the immortal Crown which I there behold laid up ready for me against I have finish'd my Course.

Go on then, O my Soul, and courageously perform all the Duties of thy severe and holy Calling, how difficult so evey to Flesh and Blood: And whensoever thou art discouraged from a strict Obedience to God's Commands, and the strictest Rules of thy great Profession, then bring all those Glories
back

back again to thy Contemplation, and renew thy Meditations on this great and endless Reward, that will at last requite thy Care, and crown thy Victory: For neither all the Reproaches and Censures of the careless World, nor all the seeming Irksomeness of a perpetual Devotion, nor the utmost Self-denial in the voluntary Loss of all worldly Pleasure, will be able to deter thee from a vigorous Exercise of Piety and Holiness, if thou hast a due Respect to this glorious Recompence of Reward.

The PRAYER.

O Adorable and ever blessed Trinity! whose Presence fills the Kingdom of Heaven with ineffable Joy, and everlasting Happiness, make me so sensible, I beseech thee, of the Vanity of all things here below, and the Greatness of the Joys above, that I may freely yield to exchange all the transitory Comforts of this frail Life, for the great Enjoyments
of

of that which is eternal: So help me in this my Pilgrimage, that I may not miss the Way to Life, though it be narrow, nor at least be denied an Entrance into thy Kingdom, though the Gate be strait: *And since the deepest Sufferings of this Life are not to be compar'd to the Glories that shall be reveal'd, give me Grace to rejoice, and be thankful for all my Afflictions, and triumph in my Sorrows here.* Grant, O my God, that the Certainty of another Life, and a due Respect to those Joys into which but few do enter, may encourage me to lead such a Life here as too few do live: *Let me be ever ready for the Coming of my Lord, the Bridegroom of my Soul! and have my Oil in my Lamp; that when he comes, I may enter with him, and be a joyful Partaker of his Glories:* That there I may join my Hallelujahs with the rest of the sacred Choir, and Hierarchy of blessed Spirits, in celebrating the Praises, and admiring the Perfections of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and sing eternal Songs of Thanksgiving

*giving to thee, for ever and ever.
Amen.*

The Contempt of the World.

I Cannot but congratulate thee, O my Soul, and exceedingly rejoice for the happy Change thou hast made, in parting with the foolish Pleasures, and despising the Riches of the perplexed World, to have thy whole Conversation in Heaven, and with the greater Freedom enjoy thy God; and by a Life of Virtue here, to prepare for a Life of endless Glory hereafter. And I now find that Delight and Satisfaction in the heavenly Course I have begun, that I am resolved to be no more entangled with these Affairs below, so as to neglect the sure and most lasting Joys above. No, Millions of Wealth, and full Ages of Mirth and sensual Pleasures joined together, shall never allure or draw me back to the busy World again: For what didst thou ever find, O my Soul,

Soul, in all thy Converse in it, that could either satisfy thy Desires, or defend thee from the just Anger of thy offended God? Or from the Temptations of thy spiritual and most bitter Enemy? I have indeed been earnest in the Pursuit of whatever the World calls great or pleasant; I have sought for it in Mirth and Jollity amongst the celebrated Companions of Humour and Briskness; but I quickly found myself deceived; for instead of real Satisfaction, I met with little else but empty Noise, and downright Folly. This made me look out elsewhere, and seek for Contentment in what mistaken Men call grave and solid, which I thought was easy to be met withal in the Society of Men of Age and Experience: But indeed I quickly found, that the subtil Spirit of the World was mistaken for Prudence, and that haughty Reservedness passed for Wisdom; and I really perceived that the Man, who by the cunning Managment of a large Estate, and an affected Air of Great-

Greatness, makes the World take him for a prudent Man, is indeed but a busy Trifler, that vainly spends his Time in seeking that which is of no Continuance, and may (without Severity or Abuse) be compar'd to a Child flying Bladders in the Air, or hunting Butter-flies.

Leaving therefore these Objects of Pity (without envying their reputed Prudence) I took myself to another Course, and sought for that Content in Learning and Disputes, which I had in vain sought for in heaping up Wealth, or Mirth and Pleasure: I knew the Soul of Man was naturally inquisitive and greedy after Knowledge, as well for the Satisfaction as the Credit of it; but here I was disappointed too: I found such unchristian Heats in Controversies, such indecent Sallies of Reproach and Passion, so much dissingenuous Artifice to cover and evade the Truth, rather than undergo the Shame of confessing an Error, that I plainly saw every Man was engaged to defend, not so much the Truth,

Truth, as his own Reputation; so that here was a *Babel* of Confusion, where all spoke a contrary Language, whilst Humility, brotherly Love, common Ingenuity, and Truth itself, were all swallowed up in Anger and Passion. Thus, like *Noah's* Dove, I found no resting Place but in the Ark of God, and the Paths of Heaven, where thou art now, O my quiet Soul! secure in the enjoyment of such Delights and Satisfaction as the World knows nothing of. I was before miserably frustrated of my Expectation in all Attempts after Contentment; here I clearly saw, that great *Solomon's* Wisdom consisted only in his knowing, that in this World there was nothing (except the Care of a future State) but what was Vanity, and infinitely beneath the Concern of our immortal Souls.

O foolish and distracted World! why all this Hurry, Noise, and Business? Whither is it that ye run? what mighty Concern are ye all with so much Earnestness in the Pursuit
of?

of? Alas! my Soul, they are busy, I see, about their own Ruin, and eagerly exchanging away Eternity for temporal Enjoyments, and contriving in this Life how to be miserable hereafter. Behold yonder Rich Man, taken up with the Management of a good Bargain, securing his Title to a late Purchase, putting out his Heaps to Usury; sweating in the crowded Courts of Law, grasping at all Advantages, advising, plotting, and contriving, 'till at last he has gathered up vast Heaps of Wealth, and then dies, and loses it all. Thus! just thus, O my Soul, is the World employed: This is their mortifying the Deeds of the Body; this is their being crucified to the World; this is their using the World as tho' they used it not; this is the Way they take to have their Conversation in Heaven; and thus, just thus, was the Man employed in the dismal Parable; he had Bags enough, and those well filled with Money; he had Land in abundance; his plenteous Harvest had yielded him great Stores of Corn, which was all secure in his Barns;

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nay,

may, his greedy Heart was satisfied, and confess'd he had enough ; so that he gave over all Thoughts of any farther Purchase or Addition to the Heap, and resolv'd now to enjoy himself, and live merrily with his Plenty: *Soul, take thy Ease, eat drink, and be merry*; cast away all Care and Fears of Poverty and future Misery; for thou art now secure from Want, and all the meagre Train of Hardships that attend it. O my Soul, how happy did this Man's Neighbours and poor Tenants account him? What Respect and Reverence did they pay him? How they cringed to the golden Calf, and flattered and praised the Conduct of his Affairs! He is an honest Man, pays all their Due, has manag'd all to the best Advantage, with a great deal of Care and Prudence. Alas! all this could not excuse him in the Sight of that God, who judgeth not as Man judgeth. His being honest would not save him, or make amends for placing his Happiness in his Wealth; that one fatal Error of valuing himself for his Riches, and
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encumbering himself with them, plunged him into endless Miseries, and deprived him of those Treasures in Heaven, which few rich Men seek after. His Heart was fixed and settled upon the World, his Security was in his Estate, and not in his God; and so quite forgetting that he was but a Steward, he began to call his Master's Goods his own, and to lay out those silver Talents on himself, which were given him to traffick with in Deeds of Charity: *Thou hast Goods, &c.* The Man little thought that he must give an Account of what he had, and so (like other rich Men) fell to purchasing and setting up for himself. Now, in the midst of this, his Master called him hence: There came a terrible Voice, that startled the secure Wretch, and quite dash'd his Jollity beyond the Help of his Friends and Admirers, and above the reach of all his Wealth; *Thou Fool, this night shall thy Soul be required of thee; then whose shall these Things be?*

How miserable, O God, was this Slave to Riches and worldly Glory!

Fool he was indeed, to be thus busy in providing for himself in this World; 'till he was called out of it, and summoned unexpectedly to the other; to be all his Life-time contriving how to find the Way to eternal Misery. But insult not over him, O my Soul, nor over those rich Brethren with whom I daily converse in the World; but tho' thou may'st despise their Wealth, commiserate their Condition, and shed, if possible, Tears of Blood, in Pity, to think of the Misery they are hastening to: Be earnest at the Throne of Mercy for their Repentance, that they may learn at length to put a less Value upon what they have so eagerly pursued; that they may not, with this miserable Soul, be at last despised, and sent to the Place of the unprofitable Servant, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth. Now these are the Men of Prudence and Caution! these are they whom the World calls Great and Wise! Short-sighted, foolish World! for the Sake of useless Bags of Money here, to forfeit the Enjoyment of
God

God and a Kingdom of Glories without End; and not only so, but gravely and deliberately to walk into everlasting Flames! Is that Prudence? Is that Policy? Look down, ye Worldlings, into the Gulph of Horror, and there see thousands of Souls, who here lived in Splendour and Greatness, now condemned to eternal Want, and in vain exclaiming against their own Folly, in spending that Time about Business here, which was given them to work out their Salvation in. Let the Thoughts of this, O my Soul, ever keep thee from the Pursuit of Riches, and make thee fearful of thy Condition, if thou shouldest ever abound in what the World calls Wealth; lest when at last I expect the Reward of Diligence in the Life of Glory, God should say to me (as he did to another) *Thou hast already received thy good Things.*

No less miserable, O my Soul, are they that run after the Pleasures of the World: See, and bewail the voluptuous Man taking his Fill of Luxury and sensual Delights, busy in

contriving how to pass away the Time in Laughter and Briskness, studying out Recreations for the next Day, in what Company, in what Sport to appear; when the Man knows not before the next Day comes, he may be cited to God's Tribunal, who, instead of the merry Company he intended, will send him perhaps, indeed, to his Companions that are dead, where all their former Mirth is turned into Cries and everlasting Sighs of bitter Anguish and Despair. What Excuses, O my Soul, do Men usually make for their many Hours thrown away after immoderate Sports and continual Recreations! It preserves Health, it promotes Mirth and Chearfulness, and drives away Melancholy, is allowed of, and practised by the Generality of those who are accounted Great and Prudent Men, and is the peculiar Mark and distinguishing Character of a Gentleman. Thus, O my God, is the Strictness and severe Piety of the primitive Christians (those who so well knew and considered how difficult it was to secure the Happiness
above)

above) forgot, and utterly neglected. Thus is Christianity itself (whose Character is Self-denial and the Cross) laid aside, to make way for immoderate Pleasures, and gross Delights. How solicitous, O blessed Apostle, are Men to fulfil this dismal Prophecy of those evil Times, when Men should be *Lovers of Pleasure more than Lovers of God*? O ye Madmen! have ye ever read the Parable of the Glutton in the Flames? And is his Condition there so amiable as to invite you to his Sufferings? And yet, God knows, if we read his Story, we shall find but little Difference betwixt him and voluptuous Christians now a-days. He was rich, and fared sumptuously every Day; had his Table covered with variety of Dishes, and laden with whatever might please his own Palate, or appear noble and splendid to his Guests. And, no question, he that was so much devoted to the gratifying his Senses, took care not to abridge himself of any Pleasure he could compass; and, to be sure, made Sport and Recreations the Employment of his Time, and

the Business of his wanton Days. So intent was he upon his pleasant and delicious Course of Life, and so taken up with better Company, that he had not Leisure enough to mind the doleful Cries of hungry *Lazarus* at the Door: It was a thing beneath his Birth and Quality; it did not become his Grandeur to take Notice of a loathsome Beggar, whose putrid Sores might have turn'd his delicate and squeamish Stomach, and spoil'd the Relish of his costly Fare. In the midst of Luxury, it could not be expected that he should leave his genteel Guests, and the brisk Companions of his Pleasures, to a hearken to the Importunity of a common Beggar: This would have been contrary to Good-breeding, and the Fashion. In short, as we say now a-days, he pass'd away the Time merrily; he enjoyed himself; made use of the Blessings which God had given him; lived like a Gentleman, and where is the hurt of all this? Thus speaks, thus lives the foolish World! But the next Words will tell you the Hurt of all this, from the sad Experience

rience of this Man of Pleasure: *He died, and was buried, and in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Torments, and seeth Abraham afar off (God knows far enough) and the Beggar in his Bosom; and he cried and said, Father Abraham, have Mercy on me and send Lazarus, that he may dip the Tip of his Finger in Water, and cool my Tongue, for I am tormented in this Flame.* This, O God, is dismal! this is sad indeed! O wretched Man, have thy Pleasures brought thee to this at last? Can thy great Birth and Quality? Can thy high and towering Spirit thus stoop to beg? Can it stoop to cry thus bitterly for so mean an Alms as a Drop of Water? Can it thus passionately beseech this Drop of Water at the hands of a Beggar, of that very Beggar too, whose importunate Cries for Bread thou didst so lately despise, and think beneath thy Notice? What! cannot all thy Money, thy Land, thy great Possessions, procure this small Request? Summon all thy Tenants, command thy numerous Attendants, entreat the jolly Companions of thy

Sports; conjure and beseech them all to requite thy wonted Favours, by reaching a small Drop of Water to thee in thy Miseries. Alas! they will not, they cannot help thee. Thy Servants have changed their Master, and will not come at thy Command; thy Tenants now belong to thy five Brethren, the Heirs of thy Wealth, thy Pleasures, and perhaps thy Torments too; and as for thy pleasant Companions, they are many of them with thee; turn aside thy flaming Eyes, and thou mayest see them burning, scorching, and crying out, like thee, for Mercy and a Drop of Water! O my troubled Soul! this Scene is very terrible? and it is yet more terrible to think, that many of thy Acquaintance, who are accounted happy Men, live just like this voluptuous Man, and are like to suffer with him when they die. How full of Grief is the End of this Mirth! how bitter the Consequence of these Pleasures! Who but Mad-men would go down the smooth and easy Way to certain Torments and everlasting Anguish? Is it worth the while to
suffer

suffer without End for Pleasures that will end so soon, and leave such Things behind them, betwixt few Years of worldly Joys, and an Eternity of unspeakable Sorrows? Is there any Comparison? Is there any Proportion? Yet these are what Men are so greedy after, that Self-denial is accounted, at best, but a melancholy Doctrine, and beneath their Notice. Thus we see that the two main Pillars of worldly Happiness, Riches and Pleasure, stand always tottering, and expose the Man to Ruin that leans upon them, and appear to be unsatisfying, and, in plain Terms, contemptible. And no less trifling, O my Soul, is Honour, Beauty, and the Fashions of the World. As for Honour, the mighty *Nebuchadnezzar* had great Titles in abundance: He was stiled *the King of all Nations*; and all People, Nations, and Languages trembled, and feared before him. This haughty Prince walked in his Palace of *Babylon*, and looking round about his stately Buildings, began to be transported at his own Grandeur: Is not

this great *Babylon* that I have built for the Honour of the Kingdom, by the Might of my Power, and for the Glory of my Majesty? Surely the Man took himself to be of a finer Stem than other Mortals; and indeed the Event shewed there was soon a great deal of Difference betwixt him and the rest of the People; for he was turned out from the Society of Men, and sent to eat Grass with his Brethren, the Beasts of the Field, being whipt and driven about by the poor Herdsmen, to learn Humility among Creatures as dull and stupid as himself: And there he fed among other Brutes, till his Hairs were grown like Eagles Feathers, and his Nails like Birds Claws.

As for the rest of those Things, O my Soul, that the World is so greedy after, they are utterly unable to yeild any true or lasting Satisfaction to them that have, or do enjoy them. Beauty is subject to a thousand Diseases, and at Death turns all to Loathsomeness and Contempt. The proudest Beauty now alive will very shortly be abhorr'd
and

and shunn'd by the poorest and most homely Beggar.

As for Pride, and the Fashions of the World, they are more vain and trifling than any of the rest of its transient Follies. Where is the Advantage of my being richer cloathed than any of my Neighbours? Will the wearing of more Colours, or more costly Stuffs than they, either make my Soul more excellent, or my Body more secure than theirs? Why then should I be so earnest to expose myself to the Anger of God, and the Censure of all sober and pious Christians, by aping all the silly Modes of fantastick People? These Fashions change almost as often as the Moon, and alter so fast, that there is as much Trouble as there is Pride, in following them; and who would be at as much Pains to purchase Damnation? Who would strive to enter in at the broad Gate, where the Passage is so easy, and where Admittance is daily given to Hundreds, who were never at half the Pains to get thither? But what sad Excuses, O my Soul, do we hear for
this

this unaccountable Folly, of throwing away our Humility and our Time together, after that Finery, which usually tends to no other End than to gratify a vain and childish Humour of being admired and gazed at by Inferiors? They tell us, that Pride lies in the Heart, and not in the Cloaths; but this is as if a Man should revile his Neighbour, and express the greatest Hatred of him; and when he is accused of the Malice, should say, that Malice does not lie in the Tongue, but in the Heart. So that although the chief Seat of Pride is in the Heart, yet we can only tell when it is there, by the outward Behaviour and Attire. But does Pride lie only in the Heart, and not at all in outward Ornaments? Certainly, either they that say so, or the Prophets, are in a very great Mistake, who are so severe only against the Pride of Finery in Apparel, that it might well put all that are guilty of it into a Fit of Trembling, to read the Doom of the *Jewish* Ladies for so crying a Sin. *The Lord saith, Because the Daughters of Zion are haughty, and*
walk

walk with their Necks stretched out; therefore it shall come to pass, that instead of Perfumes, there shall be a Stink; and instead of a Girdle, a Rent; and instead of well-set Hair, Baldness; and instead of a Stomacher, a Girding of Sackcloth; and Burning instead of Beauty. Now here is no Mention of any other Pride but that of the outward Garb; and yet surely the Jewish Women did not tell the Prophet they were not proud, for Pride lay not in the Cloaths, but in the Heart!

Thus fading, thus short, thus deceitful, and thus dangerous, O my Soul, are the Enjoyments of this despicable World: Every thing that we call pleasant is sure to leave us at the Hour of Death, when we shall have the greatest need of Help; and then all that we have here placed our Happiness in (except the Duties of Religion) will forsake us for ever, and that too in the midst of Terrors and Distractions. Farewel then, base and sordid World: Adieu to all thy Pleasures, thy Heaps of Trash call'd Wealth, and all thy despised and

and glittering Follies. Away, ye worldly Trifles all; I find no Satisfaction in the Enjoyment of you; nothing but the Fears and Disquietudes of a tormented Conscience here, and the Loss of Joys infinitely beyond you hereafter, besides the sad Experience of future Sufferings when my Life and you are at an End. I will henceforward banish you my Thoughts, and imploy my invaluable Time in the Contemplation and Search of Pleasures that are confess'd on all hands to be satisfactory, true, and lasting, even the Joys of that eternal Kingdom which never fades away. Since then, my Soul, this World, in its fairest Pretences to what is valuable, is thus false and contemptible, what do I here? Why am I thus busily groveling here below in Dust and Ashes? Why did I ever let it possess the least Portion of my Heart, or take up a single Thought in that Breast, which was, I am sure, at first design'd for a more noble Guest, and made to be the Temple of the Holy Ghost! Haste then, O my Soul, and be gone from

from this Trash, these Husks that are below, and fly away to thy *Father's House, where there are many glorious Mansions*, worthy of thy Contemplations.

The P R A Y E R.

GRANT therefore, O God my Saviour, that I may never imitate the busy World in hunting after Shadows, and for their Sakes lose the dear Treasures of Eternity. Suffer me, O Lord, to beg my Bread here, to be the Scorn of all Men, and undergo the sharpest Effects of a Life of Want and Misery, so I may at last be sure to enter into the Fullness of Joy, the Rivers of Pleasures at thy right Hand for evermore. Let me grasp and aspire after higher things than this contemptible Place could ever yet afford. Grant, I beseech thee, that I may find that Peace and Contentment out of the Noise of the disturbing World, which I have in vain sought after in its transient Pleasures and Enjoyments. And since thou hast fully assured me, O
blessed

blessed Spirit, that it is a sad Exchange
to gain the whole World, and lose my
own Soul, let thy sacred Influences
 assist and direct me how I may ra-
 ther lose the whole World, and
 save that immortal Soul. Help me,
 O God, to get an absolute Conquest
 over all the Temptations of Things
 temporal that are seen, lest they
 should cool the Fervour of my Zeal
 in the Pursuit after better Things not
 seen, that are eternal. Thus through
 thy Grace, O God, shall I escape all
 the Snares and Allurements here be-
 low, that I may imitate him who
 has said, that his *Followers are not*
of this World, even my dear Re-
 deemer; to whom with the Father
 and Holy Spirit be ever ascribed all
 Power and Glory. *Amen.*

The Holy Eucharist.

THOU art invited, O my Soul,
 to a royal Banquet; put on thy
 best Apparel then, for the King, that
 bids thee, will take great Notice of
 thy Dress. It is the Marriage-Sup-
 per

per of the great King; let us then get 'on the Wedding-Garment, that we may go out to meet the Bridegroom of my Soul. Take Care that thou appear like a Guest, lest the Lord of the Feast should look upon thee as an Intruder: But come away, all Things are ready; fly to meet thy Bridegroom, thy Beloved, who not only invites thee with all the soft Expressions of his Love, but is so earnest for thy Company, that he bids his Messengers *compel them to come in*. Surely thou dost not stand doubtful whether thou shalt go or not, nor make Excuses to put it off till another Time! Art thou sure thou shalt be again invited? And after thou hast rejected this solemn Invitation, and refused thy Company to the great Master of the Feast, who does now so passionately desire it, art thou sure to be accepted another Time? May not these Delays provoke the slighted King to cry out in his Anger, that *thou which wert in vain bidden, shalt not taste of my Supper*.

Raise up thy Faculties therefore, O my Soul, and consider the many-
Obliga-

Obligations thou art under of hastening to the Banquet of thy Lord. Think but upon the Condescension of the Almighty: He created thee, and all Things, out of nothing. He is a God omnipotent, and can spurn thee, and all the sinful Sons of Men, into the nethermost Hell, without the least Diminution of his Glory, or any Derogation from his Justice: At least he might have extended this his Bounty to the Angels, and glorified Beings, without taking any Notice of a Worm; and yet, behold! thou art invited, among the first, and thy Company so much desired, that he makes every thing stay for thy Coming; so great is the Condescension of my God! Can I add to his Happiness by partaking of his Bounty? Is it not for my own sake that he is thus pressing and earnest for my Appearance at his heavenly Table? and yet he stoops to solicit my Presence, and even entreats me to be there: Shall I then insolently reject these Submissions of the Deity, and despise the Goodness of my Creator? But as the Condescensions of thy

thy Saviour, O my Soul, in calling thee to the Feast, so the Benefits of it to thyself do oblige thee to accept this Call, and hasten to the Entertainment with an Excess of Joy.

Here is that which conveys Grace to the Soul, and nourishes my Faith, and all other Virtues, to that Degree, as to make me a new Creature, and fit me for the real Presence of my Lord in this eternal Kingdom. Here is that which ratifies the Promises of God, applies the Merits of my Redeemer's Death to my Soul; and, in a Word, seals the Pardon of my Sins. Here is that which will make me in a manner the Receptacle of my God, for he will come unto me, and make his Abode with me; so that I shall enjoy him here below, and in some measure anticipate his glorious Presence, which is in Heaven, the Delight of Angels. Reflect again upon the Honour, O my Soul. that is conferr'd upon thee: Where thou art called to sit down, whilst the Angels do but stand by and silently admire at those sacred Mysteries which
thou

thou art actually to partake of
These heavenly Spirits cannot pene-
trate into the wonderful and spiritual
Conversion of Bread and Wine into
the Body and Blood of thy dying Sa-
viour; and yet this is certainly done
for thee, if thou receivest it with a
lively Faith, and dost apply the Be-
nefits of it to thyself, by a Life of
Piety and Devotion. I am here call-
ed to eat and drink in the Presence
of the Great God, who does really
convert himself, in the Merits of his
Death and Passion, into my Soul,
through my worthy receiving the
Bread and Wine, the true Represen-
tatives of his broken Body, and his
streaming Blood. Why this great
Honour, O my Lord, to me, the
most wretched of all that are called
to thy heavenly Table? What dost
thou see in me to tempt thy Com-
passion, and invite thee to vouchsafe
me this Honour? Was it not enough
for thee to come down from thy
glorious Seat above, and die upon
the Cross for me, but must thou
also provide this heavenly Banquet
for thy Servant, and oblige him to
sit

of sit down in thy Presence, and feed
ene upon the *Bread of Life*?

itual I may now despise the Pomp of
into the great Man's full spread Table,
Sa- and all the great Partakers of his
one Luxury; for I shall here have Com-
h a panions of a far higher Quality,
Be- even the Saints of God, and God
of himself.

all- Angels do attend whilst I sit down!
ce *Jesus*, my Lord! what a grand Fa-
ly vour, what an unspeakable Honour
is is this to thy bashful Servant? But
l, here must be no Compliments. Ac-
e cept it therefore, O my Soul, and
approach this Bounty of thy Lord,
with all the thankful Reverence of an
humble Guest.

O my Soul! how am I obliged, in
Gratitude to my Saviour's Love up-
on the Cross, to be frequent in the
Commemoration of it? He there
suffered himself to be stabbed, and
pierced through the most tender
Parts, for my sake. He there trod
the Wine-press of his Father's Dis-
pleasure, and in the bitter Anguish
of his departing Soul, cried out, he
had forsaken him. The Disgrace,

as well at the Torments of his cruel Death, together with his Willingness to endure all this for my Redemption, are such Instances of Love, even in this Invitation too. as call for the highest Expression of Gratitude, and a thankful Acceptance of the Proffer. Shall the great Judge of Heaven and Earth come down from the Bench, and sue to the Malefactor, both to be released from his Chains and to become his Guest? And shall I, the Malefactor, boldly thrust him from me, and not rather accept the mighty Favour on my bended Knees and with a Heart full of Praise and Gratitude for a Kindness so great and so undeserved? Behold the Lord of Glory, who knows all my heinous Crimes against him, and sees all the Spots of my polluted Soul, bids me come to the Fountain of Life, and there wash and be clean. If then I reject this tender Instance of his Care for my Welfare, shall I not indeed be a Monster of Ingratitude? Shall I ever deserve another Offer of his Love? But above all, consider, O my Soul, it is thy Lord and Master's

Master's positive Command, that thou shouldest frequent his Table, and there join in the Commemoration of his Death. *This do in Remembrance of me*, is as positive an Order, as *Honour thy Father and Mother*; and can I ever expect to reach Heaven by the Violation of God's Commands? These dying Words of my Lord's are so very express, that here is no Colour for the least Evasion. I must therefore either do this, or renounce his Favour, by living in a wilful Contempt of his Law: And if, notwithstanding his divine Order, I refuse *to eat his Body, and drink his Blood*, I must expect no Benefit from his piercing the one, and spilling of the other; but all the dear Merits of his Love, and Effects of his Passion, are lost to me.

Why then so backward, O my Soul! why so fearful to go to meet thy Saviour? Thou art not prepared, hasten others, and prepare thyself, for this must be no Pretence to keep thee away; since they who sent their Excuses, and made light of it, had as severe a Doom as he that had not on

the Wedding-Garment. 'Tis true, whoever does his *Lord's Commands* slightly, and without Heed, must expect Punishment; and wilt thou therefore choose wholly to neglect it, and be the Servant who *knew his Master's Will but did it not*? I may be prepared, if I will; I must therefore expect a double Punishment, both for my want of Preparation, and my Absence too.

If an earthly Prince orders me a speedy Embassy, and at the time of my expected Return comes in Haste, and demands an account of it, will it be enough to tell him, that I was not yet set out, because I had not yet put on my travelling Garb? Much less will such trivial Pretences afford me any just Excuses when I appear before the great God, who will take a severe Account of my Absence, and then, like him that would not prepare to come, I shall stand speechless.

Put on thy Garments therefore, O my Soul, and haste away; for my Lord is importunate, and stays expecting thee: Wilt thou send the
King

King word, that thou art neither ready, nor will prepare to be so? That will be such an Affront indeed, as will make him for ever abhor thee, and stop all future Invitations to his Feast. Up then, O my Soul, and call up all thy Graces, and forthwith adorn thyself; for nothing will excuse thee in his Sight, if his Proffer be thus abused and slighted, since himself and the Guests are waiting with Impatience for thy Coming.

O my Lord, I come, I accept the Offer, I can no longer resist so kind an Invitation; and that I may not come unprepared, I here give up my whole self, both Soul and Body, to thy Service: And thus I now approach thy heavenly Temple, in order to present myself at thine Altar.

O my Soul! we are now in the House of God. Behold the Sermon is ended, and the devout Guests are now flocking to celebrate the Feast, and commemorate the Death and Passion of the crucified *Jesus*: Turn thyself therefore to the heavenly Table; for behold there stands the Priest of

the living God, and the Messenger of the great King is sent out to call them that are bidden. Hark! he is now proclaiming the Feast, and publishing the Invitation: *Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your Sins, draw near with Faith, and take this Holy Sacrament to your Comfort.* How solemn, O my Soul, is the Celebration of this Holy Ordinance! All things here are in a profound Silence, which well suits the Representation of so mysterious a Tragedy as the Death and Passion of the Son of God. 'Tis fit indeed, that our first Approaches to that awful Mystery should be taken up with a silent Contemplation of its Wonders.

Fall down, O my Soul and Body, and amidst these prostrate Guests, present yourselves before the Altar of God with the deepest Humility, and there, in the lowest Postures of Fear and Reverence, admire for a while the divine Goodness, in calling thee, a wretched Sinner, to a lively Representation of his Death, and conferring upon thee all the Benefits
of

of it in the worthy Celebration of these holy Mysteries. Consider, that God now hovers over thee, to inspect thy Behaviour, and will accept the Sacrifice according to the Sincerity of it, and the Ardency of thy Devotion. After a short Contemplation therefore on the Presence of God, and this great Instance of his Love, join, O my Soul, with the rest of the devout Adorers, in the general Confession, to acknowledge those cruel Sins that caused this bitter Passion of my Lord: With redoubled Cries for Mercy solicit his Pardon, and with an Humility suitable to the Guilt, cry out, *We do earnestly repent; have Mercy upon us, have Mercy upon us, most Merciful Father! For thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ's Sake, forgive us all that's past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in Newness of Life. Lift up your Hearts! yes, I will lift it up unto the Lord, that I may join with the rest in crying out with a seraphic Fervour, It is very meet and right, and our bounden Duty, that we should at all Times, and in*

all Places, give Thanks unto thee, O Lord! heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God. Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy Glorious Name evermore, praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts! Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory; Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. See the Minister, O my Soul, is now consecrating the heavenly Elements! Look on with Reverence then, and let my Heart join in this most solemn and essential Part of the sacred Institution, that so what he calls the Creatures of God, Bread and Wine, may be to me his most blessed Body and Blood.

Here, O my Soul, I may very fitly meditate on the amazing Goodness of my Redeemer, in suffering his Body to be broken, like that Bread, and his precious Blood, like the Wine, to be poured out upon the painful Cross. I may here contemplate the mighty Benefits of his Death to me, and the cruel Torments of it to himself: I
may

may here consider the strange De-
basements of the Almighty, in com-
ing down from Heaven to be here
wounded to Death, only that such
Sinners as myself might not feel
the eternal Sufferings we had de-
served. 'Tis Time that thou now
draw nigh unto the holy Altar,
O my Soul, and there actually per-
form what has hitherto been only
the Subject of thy Meditation. See
the Minister reaches out to thee the
broken Body of thy Lord! *the Body
of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was
given for thee, &c.* With the deep-
est Humility of my Soul, and with
the highest Adoration of thy Good-
ness do I now receive thee, O my
crucified Lord! I feed on thee, dear
Saviour, in my Heart, for I am now
resolved it shall be ever thine, and
thine alone, by Faith (for no other
feeding on thee will avail me). I be-
lieve the doleful History of thy Pas-
sion, and will hereafter live as tho'
I did believe it: I will receive it with
Thanksgiving, or I shall be ungrate-
ful indeed! The dead Body of a
Friend, who has lost his Life in his

Friend's Quarrel, will stir up a thankful Remembrance in the most barbarous Infidel. Shall not a Christian then raise up his inflamed Soul to the highest Pitch of Thankfulness, when he sees the broken Body of his God, who died to save that Soul from Hell? But, lo! the Ambassador comes again with another divine Message as heavenly as the former: Meet it then, my Soul, with all the Joy of a Heart ravish'd at the repeated Goodness of a bounteous God. *The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, &c.* O my bleeding Jesus! I take this Symbol at once of the Blood, and thy Love, with a Heart overcharged with Admiration of thy ineffable Goodness.

I am now urgent to find out full Expressions of my Thankfulness; but I am over-powered, and can only breathe out my Desires, that thou wouldest accept the imperfect Fervours of my aspiring Soul: My enlarged Heart is full of Praises. O God of Love, I burn, I burn with a Desire of meeting thy Love with equal Flames: *My Heart is fixed, my Heart is fixed, I will*

I will sing and give Praise. O that I could but now exceed ye, O ye Angels of God! and sing a Hymn of Praise to God my Saviour, of his own composing! For nothing less than that is worthy to express this great, this amazing Act of his Love, which my labouring Soul is now striving in vain to reach. But since I cannot praise thee, O my God, with an inspired Song, I will raise up all my Thoughts, I will call up all that is within me, and summon each Affection of my Soul, that they may all join into one united Act of Fervour, to praise thee in the devout Language of the holy Church; Glory be to God on high! We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee! we give Thanks unto thee for thy great Glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty! O Lord, the only begotten Son Jesus Christ! O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the Sins of the World, receive our Prayer! Thou that sittest at the right Hand of God the Father, have Mercy upon us! For thou only art holy, thou only art the

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Lord : Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high, in the Glory of God the Father. Thus sing, thus feast, thus live the Angels! Thus, my Soul, will I continue singing to my God, till I am from hence translated to a more intense Enjoyment of his divine Presence, in the Kingdom of Praise and endless Hallelujahs.

The PRAYER.

O *JESU!* my crucified Redeemer, I am now come from partaking of thy Love, in the Celebration of the highest Instance of it, thy Death upon the Cross. I am now come from thy Table, to pour out the earnest Desires of my soul in private; and that my Prayer may be acceptable in thy Sight, I beg in thine own Name, and for the sake of thy precious Blood, that Blood which my thirsty Soul has now been drinking: My Desire, O God, is, that I may be ever mindful of what I have now been doing, and remember, that I have here given up myself to thy Service; that

that I have ratified my baptismal Vow, and renewed my solemn Oath, to renounce the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World: And that, if I should hereafter live in any wilful Sin, it would be to account this Blood of the Covenant an unholy Thing. I have now seen thy dreadful Passion; I beseech thee, therefore, touch my Heart with so deep a Sense of thy Sufferings upon the Cross, that I may not, by any wilful Transgressions, barbarously crucify thee again, and tear open thy smarting Wounds, and make them bleed afresh. O my Lord, how rich are the Delicacies of thy Table! How sweet is this Bread of Life, with which thou hast now satisfied my hungry Soul! *Lord, evermore give me this Bread.* Had I before known the Delights of this divine Banquet, I had not been so great a Stranger there, nor stood so long to dispute thy Invitation. But with thy Leave and Assistance, I shall hereafter be thy constant Guest, and, instead of making Excuses, humbly sue for an Admission to these sacred Viands, which are of such Ad-

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vantage and unconceivable Delight to my ravish'd Soul. And since now I am wholly thine by this solemn Resignation of myself, do thou mercifully accept the Offer, and so direct the whole Course of my Life, that I may at length enjoy for ever thy divine Presence, there to understand this great Mystery of thy Body and Blood, and celebrate the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb with an Angelic Fervour and Devotion. *Amen.*

The Sufferings of Hell.

DEscend, O my Soul, into the Chambers of eternal Death: Go and visit for a while the tormented Spirits in the burning Lake: Ransack all the Corners of that sulphureous Kingdom, and survey the Miseries of the Damned there, O God, what do I see! My affrighted Soul starts at yonder Sight of Terror and Amazement! Is not that the rich Glutton who despised the Beggar? Surely it must be he! see there he lies.
wel-

weltering in Floods of Fire and boiling Brimstone! How does he gasp for a Drop, a single Drop of Water to cool his parched Tongue! See how his scalded Eyes look up for Pity, and his scorching Tongue would fain roar out his hideous Cries for Help, or the least Refreshment. Lord, wilt thou not look down in Mercy on the burning Wretch? Are not such insufferable Torments as these too great a Punishment for the highest Crimes? O let me live like begging *Lazarus* in the World; nay, let me live in perpetual Misery; and may my whole Life be one continued Torment; let me live my Age of threescore Years and ten without one Day's Freedom from my Tortures in the midst of *Nebuchadnezzar's* burning fiery Furnace, rather than come into this Place of Torment, or endure these Miseries for a single Hour.

O miserable *Dives*! my Soul is amazed at thy Sufferings. Tho' I ought to hate thee for thy Blasphemies and thy Rage against the just God, that sent thee hither, yet I am not able to see thee plunged into this
Gulph

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Gulph of Misery, and fastened to such Flames as these, without shedding a Tear at the Thoughts of thy inconceivable Sorrows, and thy unspeakable Folly, in bringing thyself hither for the Sake of those Riches and Pleasures in the World, which cannot now afford thee the least Help or Comfort in this thy sad Condition. And yet rich Men would be valued for their Wealth! Pitied, indeed, they shall be, for Pity surely belongs to them, who, much like thee, give so severe an Account of those Riches, which here, with so little Concern, they lay out in Luxury and sensual Pleasures.

How gladly now, O burning Soul! wouldst thou return to Earth again, and there lead a Life of the strictest Piety! How quickly wouldst thou rid thyself of whatever may hinder a holy Life, and throw away thy great Estate, rather than let it tempt thee again to live in sensual Ease and Softness here! What Haste wouldst thou make to fly the Society of the Great, and employ all thy Time in dressing the putrid Sores of such Beggars as
that

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that very *Lazarus*, for whose Help you now cry out in vain! How soon wouldst thou lay aside thy Purple and gorgeous Apparel, and cloath thyself with the humblest Garb of Poverty! How freely wouldst thou cease thy faring sumptuously every Day, reject thy costly Dishes, and correct thy pamper'd Flesh, like the Hermits of old, with Herbs and Roots, and what the barren Desarts afford! How earnest wouldst thou be to turn thy Beds of Down, and all thy Luxury, into the strictest Exercises of Fasting, Watching, and Prayers! How gladly, wretched *Dives*! wouldst thou perform all this, and infinitely more, so thou mightest be freed, but till thy Death, from these burning Miseries, tho' thou wert sure then to return to them again, and be for ever confined to this thy scorching Bed of Flames! But indeed it must not be: Thy Time is past and gone for ever: Thou art now enter'd into a State of Eternity, that admits no Alteration. Thou hadst thy Task appointed thee in the World, and Time allotted thee for the doing it; that

that Time is gone, no more to be recalled, after Death thou wert to receive thy Wages: But if at that Time the Work be left undone, there's no expecting Leave to go back again and do it? Nothing remains but endless Rage and Anguish of thy tortured Soul, to think upon the sad Neglect by which thou art undone for ever. O my trembling Soul, this is a Scene of Horror and Amazement! O ye desperate and merry Worldlings, look down a little into this bottomless Pit of eternal Misery, and then tremble and look pale at your Condition!

You may live merrily for a few Years; you may indeed, in a desperate Fit of Bravery, throw off the melancholy Prospect of your approaching End; you may look with Contempt upon the frightful Stories of another World, and the Cant of Scripture and the Priests; you may imagine it beneath your Quality and reputed Prudence, to be dejected at the Fears of that which, if true, is at a Distance; therefore you have Time enough to escape them. But
let

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let them go on, O my Soul, in their merry Paths, till they sport themselves into those Torments, which they will not 'till then believe. Leave them, tho' with Pity, in the broad Way, and pursue thy Meditations on this horrid Kingdom of eternal Sufferings.

What piercing Cries, and dismal Groans are here! Have you no Pity, O ye torturing Fiends? Are ye not moved at these lamentable Shrieks of tormented Wretches? But, alas! Hell is no place for Pity, and you yourselves are in the same Condition, and your bitter Cries increase the fearful Noise. O terrible Regions of Bitterness and Despair! how severe are the Lashes of raving Guilt and Conscience here! How cruel must be the Gnawings of this never-dying Worm, to extort such crying Complaints, and such deplorable Voices of Distress and Misery! What raging Accents of Grief are here! How deep and mournful are these Sighs! How swift these scalding Tears! How earnest are these bitter Pangs! Cruel Stings of eternal Repentance
and

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and endless Sorrows! *Who*, indeed, *can dwell with everlasting Burnings?* Who can bear the Racks of Torture and insupportable Agonies, under which these wretched Spirits groan and labour, without one Moment's Respite, or a Minute's Ease? Here I see no Hope of Comfort, which uses to be the last Refuge of the Miserable; but all Expectation of Mercy or Relief is for ever banished from this Place of Terror and Despair.

Cain's Punishment, in his despairing Condition, was too heavy for him, but truly 'tis now much heavier: See where he lies there overwhelm'd with hellish Anger at his Folly. How pale and ghastly are his affrighted Looks! What fretting Pangs of Anguish prey upon his guilty Soul! Now, indeed, he may cry out, *my Punishment is greater than I can bear!* O God! they are all here deprived of thy Presence. These immortal Souls were all made to enjoy their Creator, and to be to all Eternity employed in the ravishing Contemplations of thy glorious Being, and thy divine Presence. But they

they are now for ever banished from thee, and must never see the joyful Light of thy Countenance. Thou art the Source of all the Happiness above, and Millions of admiring Saints and Angels crowd about thy Throne, eager to enjoy thy sacred Presence, and are transported into Hallelujahs of Praise and Thanksgiving for their Admission to it. How wretched then are these miserable Souls, who, contrary to their own Nature and Creation, are utterly excluded from their God; and instead of being bless'd with the happy Contemplation of thy divine Goodness, are sure never to think of thee, but with the utmost Degree of Dread and Terror; Heaven itself would be void of Comfort, were it not that thou art there. How destitute of all Enjoyment then must be the hellish State, where all are Exiles, and shall ever continue in an eternal Banishment from that God, *in whose Presence there is Fulness of Joy?* How fearful are the Thoughts of this Separation from God, to a Soul that truly loves him? *My Soul pants after*

ter

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ter thee, O Jesus, my dear God! let me not then be ever torn from thee. How are these damned Spirits, O my Soul, tormented, not only for the Loss of God, but of all the unspeakable Happiness of his Kingdom? They know they might have reigned with him as Kings of Glory; whereas they are now Slaves of Misery, and Vassals of the Prince of Darkness: They are now sensible, that they might have shone more bright than the Meridian Sun, in the brightest Mansions of eternal Splendour; but now they find themselves wretched Prisoners in Chains of Darkness, even Darkness that may be felt. They know they might have been now refreshing themselves in the calm Streams of heavenly Pleasures at the Right Hand of God; but instead of that, they are now covered over with scorching Floods of fiery Sulphur.

This is a sad Exchange! and how painful are the Thoughts of it! What raving Expressions of a hellish Fury does the Remembrance of these Things extort from these angry Souls, in vain cursing their own Madness
and

and desperate Folly! How empty and destitute of all Enjoyments and worldly Comforts is this dreadful Place? Tell me, O ye tortur'd Souls, are any of all those Pleasures to be found here, which you once delighted in? Do you not sadly find, that you and those Delights and Recreations are now for ever parted, to which you were so much addicted in the World, that you did not so much as think of this eternal Separation from them? O God! I do not find any of that sensual Mirth and Briskness here, which was their chief Employment in the World: Here's no Shoutings after the Chase, nor Musick of the well-scented Hounds, which was accounted a genteel Way of sporting away that Time, which was given you *to work your Salvation* in: No, instead of that, these Vales of Horror echo only their own Groans, and the shrill Howlings of Pain and Misery. I cannot here see any of those full Glasses, and merry Cups, which used to entertain their carousing Visits, and served to pass away the tedious Time. Here's nothing

thing but parching Thirst, and crying out for Drops of any thing to slake the scalding Fury of unquenchable Flames. Tho' ye would not be persuaded to believe it, yet you may, by sad Experience, truly cry, *The End of our Mirth is Heaviness.* O my Soul! what black Society is this? These are frightful Shapes indeed! Here are Devils and Hellish Fiends at once to torture and affright. Can you, O ye damned Souls of Quality that are here, can ye brook such Company as this? What! can you stoop to lie down with the scorn'd and despicable Beggars of a Drop of Water? Is this Company for Gentlemen? Alas! alas! you yourselves are these Beggars now. There's no Distinction, no Difference in the Cries of Rich and Poor; you are all alike condemned to perish in eternal Want, and your mix'd Howlings of the extremest Poverty are united, but to no Purpose; you are joined in the common Cry after Help or Pity, tho' utterly in vain; for God, Angels, and Men, are deaf to your loud Complaints. There are your Compani-

ons with you, with whom you used to converse in familiar Mirth and Briskness; you have none else to go to for Relief, tho' it will be to little Purpose to expect Succour at their Hands, who are in the same Condemnation, and can only (and in vain too) cry back again to you, and curse you for helping to bring them to those Sufferings, in which you can now afford neither Pity nor Relief. But my bleeding Heart, covered with Amazements of their horrid Sufferings, makes me afraid to insult over them in their inconceivable Miseries. O my Soul! canst thou think of dwelling for ever with such Society as this? Canst thou be content not only to hear, but to join in these raging Curses against God and one another; these horrid Blasphemies, and raving Yells of Madness and hellish Fury? Truly were there no other, yet these would be Torments enough to create a Hell of insupportable Horror. O my Soul! thus burn, thus howl, thus weep, and thus rage the damned Spirits, the dark Inhabitants of Hell; and yet, alas!

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alas! the greatest Misery is still behind: For were there any the least Expectation of coming out from hence, it would be some Ease, even in their present Sufferings.

But here they burn, and burn they must for ever: Here's no Hope of Freedom, no End of Torments, no Redemption, none at all; for it is an irrevocable Decree, and irreversible Maxim in the Laws of divine Vengeance, *Once in Hell, and there for ever.* O ye suffering Reprobates! 'tis a sad thing, that ye must continue in this hot Gulph of Pain for a whole Day; but how much more sad and dreadful is it, that ye must lie here fix'd and immoveable for a Year? It is then very dreadful, to be covered with these Fires for an Age; for who can bear an Age of such racking Torments? But, farther, you must remain here, and not stir from hence, till a thousand tedious Years are quite expired. O this is heavy and insupportable! who would lie thus long in Flames, for the Sake of a short Life of Pleasure and sensual Satisfaction? But hark ye! this is

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not all, you must be here in these Torments, not for a Day, a Year, an Age, or an hundred Years, but always, even for ever and ever. When you have lain here as many Millions of Ages as there are Drops of Water in the Sea, it will be the same Thing as it is now, and their Eternity will not be a Moment nearer to an End than now; for it never will have an End at all. O sad, O restless Eternity! into what a Maze and unaccountable Labyrinth art thou enter'd! My Thoughts are all dark and confused in this vain Search after the Duration of Eternity. I am busied with heaping up Millions of Years to reach it; and when I can add no more, I suppose the rest: But all my innumerable Figures are but Trifles, and my Supposals vain and frivolous; for I must at last throw all my Numbers and my Pen away, since instead of reaching the End, I am not now, nor ever shall be, any farther than the Beginning of the first Moment of Eternity, as if it had a Second, as if the First should ever end. Alas! it has no Moments, it

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has no Measures of Time; it has no Time at all, for Eternity is when Time shall be no more. I see I must go no farther, I cannot attempt a Description of Eternity, for 'tis beyond my Capacity to think how long that is which has no Length, no End at all: Break off abruptly therefore, O my Soul, from this amazing Contemplation, for truly I am overwhelmed in the mysterious Depth of Eternity.

The PRAYER.

O GOD of Terror, who art, to the wilful Despisers of thy just Commands, a consuming Fire, grant that I may use my utmost Diligence to observe those Commands, and escape that Fire. Let me never think thy Punishments unequal, since thy Laws are so just and righteous, and since thou art pleased to make me continual Offers of thy Grace to assist me in the Observance of them. If the astonishing Instances of thy Love cannot allure me to a Return of Gratitude; if the Pleasure and Satisfaction

faction of having done my Duty, cannot invite me to set about it; if the eternal Glories of thy Kingdom are not of Force enough to oblige me to direct my Course thither, yet, at least, may *the Terrors of the Lord persuade me*. Let the Fears of thy everlasting Displeasure, and the fearful Torments of thine Anger, drive and force me to a Life of Holiness and Piety, lest I run upon these dismal Effects of thy Wrath, and feel the insupportable Load of thy burning Vengeance. Make me sensible, O God, how unable I am to bear the least of all those insufferable Torments, which are prepared for them that live Lives of careless Ease and Pleasures here. O let me not, I beseech thee, *receive my good Things in this Life*, but let my Days and Nights be full of Mourning, and my Years of Trouble, so that I may escape the sad Afflictions of Eternity. May I have my Cup brim-full of Sorrows here, and lie under the heavy Pressures even of a wounded Spirit, rather than groan beneath the Terrors of Despair in Hell, and the gnawing

Worm that never dies. Thou, O Sun of Righteousness, art my Light and my Life : How dreadful then will be a perpetual Separation from thy dear and comfortable Presence ! Grant therefore that I may so walk here in this Life, that when it is at an End, I may not be banish'd from thy Sight for ever, but may live and reign with thee in Life everlasting. *Amen.*

*The Shame of appearing strictly
pious.*

TIS a sad Reflection, O my Soul, to think that there should be such a Creature in the World as a Christian ashamed of Christ ; yet there are great Numbers of such Wretches forgetful of the holy Name by which they are called. One would think indeed, that since they are so shy in owning the Strictness and Piety of their Christian Profession, they should act generously and bare-faced, and openly disown their Baptism, as well in Word as Deed ; especially con-

considering how little it will avail them. For since they are ashamed to observe their baptismal Vow, that holy Sacrement will be so far from furthering their Salvation, that *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* will find Mercy in the Day of Judgment sooner than they. They read in the sacred Writ, that they must not pray in the Corners of the Streets, nor perform any religious Duty, from a vain Desire to be seen of Men; and from hence they take Refuge to excuse themselves from Discourses, or publick Acts of Charity; little considering, that 'tis the same thing whether they go to Hell as Hypocrites, or as Despisers of the Simplicity of their holy Faith. Surely, those that blush at the holy Example of their Saviour, will find as little Mercy at his Hands, and feel the burning Tophet as hot as he that professes him out of vain Glory! For 'tis certain, that to do one's Duty (tho' not from any exact Principle of Good) is far better than wholly to neglect and despise it. O my Soul, what extream Weakness and Folly are these bashful

Professors, or rather Contemners of the Christian Faith, guilty of! They are, indeed, generally such as the mistaken World sets a Value on for their Prudence: But this is like the false and flattering World, to judge a Christian prudent by the lofty Reservedness of his Carriage, which is so far from the Simplicity of the Christian Temper, by which indeed we ought wholly to abstract the Man from all his outward Grandeur and Accomplishments, before we can pass a right Judgment on him; for nothing is more certain, than that these very Men, whose haughty and affected Prudence cannot stoop to the severe Rules of Piety, for fear of being reputed low-spirited, are very short-sighted, and act no otherwise than pitied Idiots. Like Children, they are afraid of Bugbears, and yet run into the Fire; for they are such Cowards, as to fear *them that can kill the Body, and then can do no more*; but they are ashamed to fear him that can cast both Soul and Body into Hell.

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But consider, O my Soul, that the base Ingratitude of disowning thy Saviour, is even greater than the Folly of it. Shall I ever be ashamed to assert and vindicate his Honour among the briskest Companions of Vice and Wickedness, when he was not ashamed, for my Sake, to be born in a dirty Stable, and of the meanest Parents; to undergo infinite Contempt and Reproaches in the World; to be apprehended as a Thief; to be tried and condemned as a guilty Felon; to be shamefully and openly whipp'd and scourged in the View both of his Friends and Enemies; and then, after innumerable Mocks and Taunts, to be hanged up and executed as a Malefactor? Shall my Lord and my Redeemer, who was God, thus bear the Cross, and despise the Shame, and all this for a Worm? And shall that Worm be ashamed of his glorious Gospel, and scorn to imitate his great Example of the strictest Innocence, Humility, and Devotion? But the World will deride me: Let it, for then I shall be happy indeed; my Lord has assur'd me (and I will be-

lieve him) that if I am not *ashamed* to confess him before Men, he will certainly confess and own me before the Angels of God. This same Contempt of Men for the Sake of Christ, ought to be no strange Thing to a Christian; for it was one of the Conditions on which his holy Disciples were to receive their Crowns, *Who-soever will be my Disciple, must take up his Cross and follow me.* And that they might expect no better Usage in the World, he tells them, a little before his Passion, *Ye shall be hated of all Men for my Name's sake; but he that endures to the End shall be saved.* O my God! how happy then shall I be, if I am scorned for the Strictness of my Life, with the afflicted Apostle, and *become a Fool for Christ?* O that I might have this certain Character of a Disciple of the blessed *Jesus!* how would I triumph in the Shame! how would I exult in the Reproach, and even *glory in the Cross of Christ!*

O my Soul! shall I be ashamed of the Life of Angels? Their happy Eternity is employed in praising and
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adoring their Creator; shall I then be afraid to be devout, or discourse before Men on his Goodness and divine Perfections? Shall I be ashamed of that for which I was born, and made a happy Member of the Church of God? Shall my Soul shrink back, and think that beneath its Notice, which is of all Things the most suitable to its Angel-like Nature, and for which alone it was created? Let the World laugh at the Folly of the Cross; it will weep e'er long, and then it will be my Turn to sing and triumph, and my Mirth will then be eternal, as their Fears: I can cheerfully suffer the Derision of wicked Men, whilst the Angels in Heaven rejoice, and applaud my Courage: And certainly I shall not be so mad as to let Fools laugh me out of Heaven and everlasting Happiness! for if I cowardly shrink back at the childish Censures of Men, and *am ashamed of Christ and his Truth before them*, he has positively threatened to be ashamed of me, when he comes in the Glory of his Father.

Laugh on then, ye mighty Men of Stateliness and worldly Repute, it is not beneath my Quality to be Religious, and submit to the lowest Offices of my Christian Calling; nor will I run upon this fearful Doom, for fear of lessening my Repute with you, or being ridiculed by the little Censures of the Wits. I can be contented to obey my Saviour's Directions, and enter into Heaven with the Simplicity of a Child, and you may walk on merrily, and like Men of Parts, another Way. But you had best stop, and think a little, before you go too far, how shamefully you will come off at last, when the Redeemer of others shall be *ashamed of you*, and ye shall stand exposed to the utmost Scorn of God, Angels, and Men, and with Shame and Contempt be sent away from the Throne of God, into a Place of *eternal Banishment and Confusion*.

Let your Light so shine before Men, is a positive Command of my God and Saviour; and shall I venture to trample upon his Commands? Shall I boldly rush on into a wilful Disobedience,

bedience, and desperately break a divine Law so exprefs as this? My *Candle* was not given me to *put under a Bushel*, nor my *Talent* to be *wrapt up* and *bidden from the Sight of Men*: I will therefore take care to lay it out, and improve it to my Master's Honour and Advantage, that so I may at last *give a chearful Account of my Stewardship*, and *may inherit the Reward of the good and faithful Servant*; *Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*

There is no sort of Sin, or Wickedness in the World, that ever ruined so many Souls, as the ill Example of Men. The Carelessness of those with whom we daily converse, who are Men of Repute in the World for Honesty and prudent Behaviour, makes us think, that if we come to their Life, we are secure enough; at least as secure as most Men, and we think we may venture our Souls as well as they.

Thus, when we see Men are not Drunkards, or Gluttons, Swearers, Profaners of the Lord's Day, or the like; if they avoid Adultery, Co-

vetousness, and notorious Sins, we reckon them fit Patterns for us to follow; and so if we can but live as they do, foolishly promise ourselves the Glories of that Kingdom, into which, if we stop here, we shall never enter. Since then, my Soul, this general ill Example of the careless World is the Cause of its own Ruin, and makes good the Truth of that severe Sentence, that *few shall enter into Heaven*, I must not help to make the Number fewer, by being cold in my Christian Calling, or ashamed to make a more zealous Profession of it than the luke-warm Pretenders to it. I will rather endeavour, with my utmost Zeal, to repair the fatal Mischief, and by Diligence and Courage in my great Master's Service, will not be ashamed to shew Men that I am *striving to enter in at the strait Gate*: I will walk *so circumspectly before God and Men*, and let my Light so shine before them, as, if possible, to allure them to be my Fellow-Travellers to a continual City. For thy Support then, O my Soul, in the Performance of this holy Resolution

tion of standing up for thy Redeemer's Honour, notwithstanding the silly Censures of Men, take along with thee the great Examples of this holy Courage, which the Book of God has laid before thee for thy Imitation.

How fervent an Example of this was the holy Psalmist, that devout and humble Pattern of Courage, in setting forth the *Glory of God*, even to the Abasement of his own! I blush at my own Backwardness in shewing my Zeal for God, when I consider the high Example of his in the most publick and exalted Manner, that the most ardent Zeal could prompt you to. The Ark of God was brought to the City of *David*, which filled his Royal Heart with such a Measure of devout Gladness, that, to welcome it, he laid by his Kingly Robes, put on a Surplice, and, to testify his pious Joys, fell to *dancing before the Ark with all his Might*, and that in the Sight of all his Courtiers and the People. The blushing Queen saw it, and thought it so much beneath his Royal Dignity, as
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to scorn and ridicule him for it, with all the Contempt and Passion of a haughty Spirit, too great to brook the low Debasement of her Husband's Majesty. *And Michal, Saul's Daughter, looked through a Window, and saw King David dancing before the Lord, and she despised him. And she came out to meet him, and scornfully said, How glorious was the King of Israel to Day, who uncover'd himself in the Eyes of the Handmaids of his Servants, as one of the vain Fellows shamefully uncovereth himself!* Here was an open Contempt, enough to put him out of Countenance; and would certainly have made him blush at the Forwardness of his transported Zeal, had he not had a true Relish of Piety and Fervour. But his Answer shew'd how far he was from being ashamed: *And David said unto Michal, It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy Father, and before all his House, to appoint me Ruler over the People of the Lord. And I will be yet more vile than this, and will be base in my own Sight, &c.*

appearing strictly pious. III

O my Soul, how very glorious and heroick was this Action of the Royal Prophet! How great and honourable was he at this Instant in the Eyes of God, though the Subjects had him in Derision! The blessed Angels above would surely emulate such a Zeal as this; for he bravely scorned the Contempt of Men, and gladly made himself vile in their Eyes, and his own too, that he might be dear in the Sight of Heaven.

This a King did, a King whose Name was terrible for Valour, and whose Friendship was humbly courted by the greatest Princes round about him: And yet his Grandeur could not make him ashamed to lay aside all his Honour, and stoop to the meanest Instances of a true Piety, by which he might advance to the Glory of a greater King. Surely then such a Zeal for the Honour of my Redeemer, will not be beneath me, whose Vileness makes me unworthy to speak, or even think of this holy Monarch, without rising up at his sacred Memory, and celebrating the devout and heavenly Ardour of his Royal Heart.

Heart. Consider, O my Soul, the Apostles, those high Patterns of Courage, in the midst of publick Scorn, when they were had before Kings and Princes for his Name's sake; and after they had been shamefully beaten and dismissed for preaching in the Name of *Jesus*, and planting his holy Doctrine, they departed from the Presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer Shame for his Name; and notwithstanding the Abuses of the Great, and Reproaches of the Rulers, yet, daily in the Temple, and in every House, they ceased not to preach *Jesus Christ*.

How great, my Soul, was St. *Paul's* Desire of glorifying God, without Respect to outward Repute, or the Esteem of the censuring World! How burning was his earnest Zeal after the Conversion of Souls, and the Honour of his great Master! What a divine Example of despising the vain Judgments and Reproach of Men, does he shew himself to his dear *Philippians*! *I hope that I shall in nothing be ashamed, but that*
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with all Boldness, as always, so now also, shall Christ be magnified in my Body, whether it be by Life or by Death. Being reviled, we bless; being defamed, we intreat. We are made as the Filth of the World, and are the Off-scouring of all things to this Day: Therefore I take Pleasure in Reproaches, in Necessities, in Persecutions for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong. We are Fools for Christ's sake; we are weak; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

This great Apostle was five times scourg'd and whipp'd, as often buffeted, and once stoned in the most contumelious Manner; yet he still persisted in the open Profession of his holy Faith; and after all says, that he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. And shall I be afraid to publish the Goodness of my God, or be dishearten'd from vindicating his Honour, whenever a rich or gaudy Sinner dares expose him in his Raillery and insipid Reflections on Piety, and a mortified Temper? What! shall I be afraid to reprove an Atheist for swear-

swearing by that Holy Name by which I am called, and tamely hear him in his impious Oaths abuse the precious Blood and Wounds of my dear Redeemer? Shall I thus basely betray the Honour of my great God and Master, and shrink back from defending his Goodness, as if it were an attempt too bold, and contrary to good Breeding, to correct an honourable and wealthy Wretch, who makes bold with God himself, and has no more Manners than to affront the great Majesty which made the bold and haughty Worm out of Dust and Ashes? No, my Soul, let his Barns be full, and his Bags too; let his Titles swell to never so large a Catalogue; let him fetch his long-winded Pedigree from the ancient Emperors; let his crouching Tenants and Liveries fill a City; let him, with his Brother in the Gospel, *wear Purple, go fine, fare sumptuously every Day*, yet will I never suffer him, without a severe Reproof, to abuse Piety and Religion, or any ways to affront my dear Lord and Master. Sooner shall my Tongue
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cleave to the Roof of my Mouth,
than lie still and cease to assert the
Greatness of that sacred Name, a-
gainst the mightiest Contemners of
it: That Name which the very
Powers of Darkness dread, and in
whom they believe and tremble!

The PRAYER.

O Eternal and Almighty God,
who hast said, that those that
honour thee, thou wilt honour; but
they that despise thee, shall be light-
ly esteemed, suffer me not at any
Time to be disheartened from pro-
claiming thy Goodness among the
wicked Despisers of it, *nor fear what
Man can do unto me.* Let me ever
glory in thy holy Name, even in the
midst of those that swear by it; and
be in all Places as ready to assert my
Christian Profession, as others are to
disown it. Grant that I may never be
asham'd to shew the greatest Ear-
nestness and Courage in my Christian
Warfare, since I shall not be asham'd
to expect my Crown of Reward laid
up for me at the End of it. And
since

since the Servant is not above his Lord, may the insolent Crowd, to my despised Saviour, when they laugh'd him to Scorn, make me expect no better Usage, and excite me to pass by the Mocks and Reproach of Men, as beneath the Notice and Courage of a Soldier of *Christ*, the Captain of my Salvation. O let me never be hardened into such a Forgetfulness of my baptismal Vow, by my Backwardness in the Defence of thy holy Name, as to renounce thee instead of the Pumps and Vanities of this wicked World, lest thou, the Judge of all Men, shouldst at last renounce me before God, and the holy Angels. Not only the Greatness of thy Majesty, but thy divine Goodness, makes thy Service to be the highest Honour; and therefore, instead of being *ashamed to confess thee before Men*, let me never, with the holy Psalmist, *make my Boast in the Lord; that so at the Day of Judgment, I may appear before thy great Tribunal with Hope and Confidence*, and may be able to say, *I have not refrained my Lips, O Lord, thou knowest.*

knowest. May I ever consider, O my God, that the eternal Rewards of thy Kingdom are well worth the most shameful Sufferings of this Life; and that the Honour and Repute which I may lose here by a forward Zeal to thy Glory, will be fully made up in the future Enjoyment of an eternal Crown of Honour: And 'tis sure a happy Bargain to suffer a little Shame on Earth, and be made an Heir of Heaven. To forego the Reputation of the World for the glorious Titles of the *Sons of God*, is a good Exchange: And let the Thoughts of this, I beseech thee, inspire me with Courage enough to break through all the Difficulties of Scorn and Censure, rather than be disown'd and rejected by thee, and at last shut out from thy blissful Presence, with that fearful Sentence, *Depart from me, I know ye not.* Amen.

Of DEATH.

METHINKS I here live merrily in the World, pass away my Time in careless Ease and Briskness.

ness. They talk that this world is full of Troubles, but I am sure I want for nothing; for whilst many others *eat the Bread of Carefulness*, I live at Ease and Pleasure, free from Sickness, and secure from Want. But let me stop a little and consider, Will this last always? Will there not come a Day when all these Enjoyments, and even I myself, shall be no more? I am now indeed in Health and Vigour; but so were many Men the last Month, that are now in another World, and I am made like them, and subject to those Diseases that sent them to their Graves. This is a sad Meditation to me, that live and enjoy the World, to think that I must part with it e'er long. But since a serious Reflection on my Departure out of this Life may be useful to a speedy Preparation for another, I will retire a little to my Closet, or yonder private Walk, and there meditate a while on the Day of my Death.

As certain, O my Soul, as thou art now thinking, so certain is it that thou shalt shortly be separated from this Body. Look back upon all the
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Ages of the World, and consider what is become of all the Men that lived in them: Truly they are all gone away; not one shall we find, but what has left this World, and shall never return to it again. My Ancestors, who have inherited these Lands, and inhabited this House, are all dead; have taken an eternal Leave of this Estate of theirs: And as sure as they left it me, so shall I shortly leave it another, and bid adieu to this handsome Seat, and all my Wealth besides. Unhappy Man! why then do I take all this Care, and am solicitous to increase those Riches which will so suddenly be none of mine? Why do I thus concern myself with other Mens Business, and neglect the grand Affair of eternal Life? I am at present call'd Master of the House; but I shall soon be carried out of it, a helpless Corpse, shunn'd by the meanest of my Servants, and be removed to another House, the House of Mourning, not above six Foot long, and a Yard high: Thus will the Body be disposed of. But I have another Part about me that will
never

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never

never die, an immortal Soul, that must be for ever in another World. Now which of these two is the greater Concern, and requires the greater Care? Why do I not think oftener of Death then, since it will so certainly seize upon me? My Father, not many Years since, as healthy as myself, is dead, and lies yonder, a Coffin full of Dust. Now 'tis impossible for a mortal Father to beget an immortal Son; 'tis certain therefore that my Coffin will shortly be with his, and then the Estate which he once called his, and now I call mine, will be taken from us both by a third Man, who will likewise come to us in a little Time, and leave it to I know not whom. A fine World this is to set one's Heart upon!

But as Death is certain, O my Soul, so 'tis very hasty too; for seven Years (and the Law allows me to live no longer) is a Trifle; and if I should live thirty Years from this Day, I shall at last say, that's a Trifle too. But if I look into the Neighbourhood, I shall find, that of fifty People, who thirty Years since were as old

as I am now, forty, at least, are under Ground. I may leave this World to-morrow; but if I do not, yet the Day is coming when I may truly say, I shall die to-morrow: And shall I not at that Time think it true, that Death is hasty, and my Life short?

I now vainly propose to myself many Years to come (no Question but my Father thought so too) and yet those promised Years are nothing now, but are all vanished, and, like him, gone for ever. I think twenty Years a long Time; but if I look back upon twenty Years that are past, it will shew me my Mistake, for they appear but as yesterday; and 'tis certain, that the Years to come will be no longer than the Years past.

Consider, O my Soul, in Time consider, that this Death will put an End to all my Greatness here. All my Money and my Purchases, which now, instead of Watching, and the Duties of Holiness, employ my Time, will then be torn away from me, and pass to others. It will then appear I have been labouring to make

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some body else rich ; and will it not then be a sad Reflection, to think that I have spent my Time to be damn'd for another Man, and must endure endless Torments for I know not whom ? All my Gaiety, and these fine Cloaths, will then be turned into a Shrowd, and not any thing of my Finery will remain, but the Pride of it to be answered for. Perhaps I have now a Title of Respect beyond the lower Rank of Men ; but all that I shall then be call'd, will be a dead Corpse, and the Minister will rudely forget my Title of Distinction, and cry *Earth to Earth, Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust.*

To be satisfied of the Truth of this, let us step a little, O my Soul, to yonder Vault, where my Kindred lie interred, and there see what the Greatness of this World comes to, and take a more sensible View of what I myself must quickly be. How dark and silent is this horrid Place ! Here is no living Creature but myself and Worms. My Candle burns dim, and I am frighted ; my Blood chills for fear of those who were once my dearest Friends ;

Friends ; but I am resolved to venture forward, and to make my Meditations on this doleful Subject more exact, I'll ransack this Chamber of Death ; and since none are here to keep me Company, I'll converse with the Dead, and discourse a while to them that cannot hear me ; I'll go and open that Coffin there, whose Inscription tells me that my Mother lies within. All the tender Instances of her Love come now afresh into my Memory, and I am resolved once more to see her, and requite her Affection, by shedding a filial Tear over those dear Remains of her's. I long to see that smiling Face again with which she died ; for methought her Countenance look'd sadly amiable, as she cast her dying Eyes upon us, and parted from us in a Smile of Love. O God ! what do I see ? Lying Epitaph ! is this my Mother ? Was I born of this putrid Dust ? Did I proceed from a Body that breeds these loathsome Worms, and all these noisome Vermin ? Is it true then, that these clammy Pieces of corrupted Flesh were once the well-proportion'd Body of

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her that bore me? Where then are the tender Breasts that nourished my Infancy, and the Arms with which she used to clasp me. Alas! here's nothing left but crawling Lumps of Filth and Putrifaction. How grim and fearful looks the naked Skull! Are these the Smiles! Is the dying Calmness of her Countenance all turned to this! Here are the Hollows, but the Eyes are now devoured, which languish'd with so much mournful Sweetness, when she cast them towards me as she lay gasping, to falter out her Blessing, the last Expression of her Love to me. Where are the Lips which, as she blessed me, trembled and turned pale, as the sad Forerunner of her Change? Here's nothing but the Orifice of her Mouth, all full of clammy Dust, with a frightful Appearance of an imperfect Row of Teeth, which only serve to make the meager Sight more dismal, and add Liveliness to the Horror.

O loathsome State of all Men in the Grave! I knew it was ill enough; but at my opening the Coffin, I little thought of such a Disappointment:

For

For instead of pale and ghastly Looks
which I expected, I find no Face at
all, nor any thing else but an amazing
Object of Grief and Wonder. Haste
away then, O my Soul, from this
silent Room of Dread and Horror,
and approach not the rest of these
broken Coffins here: Thou hast al-
ready seen enough to discourage any
farther Search among the filthy Re-
liquies of the Dead. I will return to
the solitary Walk from whence
I came, and there pursue my Re-
flections on this melancholy Ad-
venture, and take a farther Pro-
spect on the Day of my Death. O
my Soul! what hast thou now been
seeing! how fearful were all the ghast-
ly Appearances of yonder Corpse!
How damp and earthy was the Smell!
What deadly Mists of corrupted
Sweat exhaled from the Scraps of the
devoured Corpse! How full was the
Vault of cold and pernicious Steams,
from each rotting Carcase there! Now
indeed I believe the Relation which
I have read of a young Hermit,
“ who was passionately in Love with
“ a Lady that soon after died; but
“ he

“ he could not disengage his Fancy
“ from the Thoughts of her, till at
“ last going privately to her Vault,
“ after a Fortnight’s Burial, he takes
“ a full View of all her ghastly De-
“ formities, and with his Coat wipes
“ off the corrupted Moisture from
“ the Carcase ; and so oft as his
“ Passion returned, he looked upon
“ that, and said, Behold the Beauty
“ of the Woman I did so much de-
“ sire ! which at last cured him of his
“ former Fancies.” Go then, ye in-
considerate Lovers of the World,
heap up Riches, and secure Estates ;
but know this, that at last the utmost
Benefit of all your Wealth, shall be
a splendid Coffin with gilt Hinges.
A great Purchase to throw away Time
and an Immortal Soul upon ! to fol-
low all the glittering Follies of the Age,
that ye may at last be cloathed with a
little Flannel and a great deal of Cor-
ruption ! To gratify your luxurious
Appetites a while with the Pleasures
of the most luscious Fare that is, that
you may prepare a Carcase ready pam-
per’d for the Worms ! Go, proud
Woman, if you can endure it, to an
unburied

unburied Corpse of Quality, that has lain but a Week above Ground, and there see what all your Perfumes will at last come to, when your Friends will keep from you to avoid the Stench of your tainted Body. Be ambitious after worldly Glory, and numerous Titles of applauded Honour, and then take St *Austin's* Meditations, and see the Account he there gives of *Cæsar's* buried Body, the Skull of which he found with a Toad in the Mouth, bred, perhaps, in the same Place. How little did the *Emperor* think of this, in the Height of his Conquests, and the Top of all his Glory! Since then, my Soul, Death is so certain, so hasty, and is the Ruin of worldly Grandeur, surely I am plainly distracted, if I spend either my Time or my Thoughts about these worldly Things, that will leave me so certainly, and so soon. I see then I must betake myself to a more earnest Consideration of this great Concern. And since I am now entered upon this mournful Subject, I'll go through with it, till I reduce my

my Meditation into Practice, that it may not be in vain.

And that my Thoughts may be the more exact in this great Affair, that they may not proceed only from Fears and melancholy Reflections, but be guided by a rational Enquiry, I will go and visit a Friend of mine, who lived in great Repute, but now lies upon his dying Bed, and I will ask him what he thinks of this World, and another? 'Tis true, I doubt he has been but little acquainted with the other; but I am sure he can give me an exact Account of this. Come then, my Soul, let us pay a Visit, which it is likely may be the last. I will not be afraid, for my late Converse with the Dead will harden me beyond the Reach of Fear, at the Sight of my departing Neighbour: And besides, both his Quality and our near Acquaintance seem to require the Civility of a Visit, where I am resolved, if possible, to be satisfied of a dying Worldling's last Conceptions of the World: For dying Mens Thoughts of these Things must needs be the clearest, since they cease
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to be partial, and have the truest Ideas of what is past, and the most sensible Prospect of what's to come.

What bitter Groans are these I hear? what Fears of a dejected Spirit have seized upon my Friend! Surely this is not the usual Temper of him, whom I have always known so jovial and courageous! Why stand ye thus about him, ye helpless Mourners, and do not turn your insignificant Tears and mournful Looks into Prayer and consolatory Advice in this sad Juncture of Fears and Terrors? I see here's no Room for Questions, nor any Opportunity of conversing with him about my intended Subject: But hark! I hear him complain of some fatal Mistake he has committed, in setting his Heart upon that which will now be no longer his.

O cursed Estate that has undone me! Ye base deceitful Riches, will ye leave me then at this bitter Hour of Distress? Ungrateful World! thou hast had my Heart, and dost thou thus requite me for it? Will ye not purchase for me (I do not say the Kingdom of Heaven, for I despair

of

of coming thither) but one Day's Respite from these Gripes of Terror, these aching Pangs of my despairing Soul, now falling into Torments, never to come back again! O cruel gnawing Worm! *art thou come to torment me before my Time?* I was told indeed, by him that might have been my Saviour, of the never-dying Rage of Conscience in the burning Lake: But I never fear'd it before my Entrance thither; and I question'd not to escape it there, by a timely Repentance before my Death: And behold now the intended Time of my Repentance is to come, I have not now Grace enough to offer up a devout Prayer to that God whose Service never used to be my Business. Fain would I now repent, and cannot: All I can now do, is to curse my Folly, and be sorry for the ensuing Punishment of my Sins; and thus far the tormented Spirits do repent. I did intend, before this fatal Hour came, to have been very bountiful to the Poor, and have purchased my Peace with God at the Price of a good Part of my Estate. But, O God!

God! I now perceive I must suffer for that very Intention, in having such low Thoughts of an Almighty God, as to expect he would be satisfied with Money for the Violation of his Commands, and my Distrust of his Providence.

O vain bewitching Pleasures! will ye leave me thus? When I was of late so eager in the Chase of you, how little did I expect this dreadful Hour, and these Fears of Hell, which now damp and embitter all my former Sports and sensual Pleasures? O this is a sad Hour, that puts an End to all my Enjoyments, and begins the Sorrows of Eternity! Let the Minister be quickly sent for; but, O God, the mention of him brings new Fears and Terrors to my guilty Mind; for I have all his Sermons to answer for, which I have heard, commended, and forgotten. I thought it beneath my Repute and Dignity to take Notice of his Reproofs, or submit to his tedious Rules of despising the World and my Estate for the sake of Heaven. But now I beseech him, with all the Humility of a dying Supplicant,

plicant, to intercede for me at his Master's Throne, and offer up his earnest Prayers in my Behalf: But to what Purpose? It is in vain to hope they will prevail for one, who has not Grace enough to join in this last Office for his wretched Soul. No, did these Desires of mine proceed from a true Sense of the Goodness of that God whom I have offended, they would argue my Condition not so desperate; but I must confess, they are caused only by the Fears of that dreadful Punishment I am hastening to. How little did I once expect this Deadness of Heart, and these Distractions in my Sickness, when I designed it for the Time of my Repentance, and foolishly resolved to reconcile myself then to my slighted God? Farewel then all ye mourning Friends about me, ye *Job's* Comforters, that cannot help me in my deplorable Condition: Farewel for ever! and remember the dying Condition of a despairing Sinner now going to God's Tribunal, there to be condemn'd for not *working out my Salvation with Fear and Trembling.* But see, my Soul,
Death

Death now begins to put a Stop to his imperfect Speech, and hinders the Continuance of his sad Complaints: Lo! his bitter Accents end in confused and unintelligible Cries, which seem to speak the Terrors that are within. What a dismal Combat is here betwixt the dismay'd and fearful Soul, and the struggling Body! This Death is terrible indeed! I am now satisfied of the Opinion which careless Men have of the World when they come to die, and give an impartial Judgment of it. 'Tis true, many wretched Worldlings (whose Condition is equally desperate with this complaining Sinner's) die without any of these visible Disturbances, because they are stupid, and not so sensible as he of their approaching Miseries: But the Condition of all who have lived like him, must needs be alike hopeless, though they may seem to smother their inward Fears, and sad Dejection of Spirit. If then I do not take care to prevent the like Cause of Complaint at my last Hour, by a timely bidding adieu to all the Hindrances of Piety, I shall then deserve

serve those Miseries, the Apprehensions of which over-whelm'd this fearful Soul with these black Thoughts, and convulsive Terrors of Despair.

Consider, O my Soul, that I shall die but once: There's no returning back from the Tribunal of God, to amend my former Life, or make amends for those Sins, for which I shall there receive my Doom. Could that indeed be obtained, the Folly of a careless Life would be the more excusable: But once dead, and I am saved, or lost for ever. I have but one age to live, and shall I squander it away, and employ it about the Trifles of an Estate? Could that Estate indeed purchase me those Treasures in Heaven, which God sent me hither to secure, it were worth my while to value it: But instead of that, to forfeit those very Treasures for the sake of it, and exchange away eternal Happiness for the sake of a few Years Enjoyment here, is that a Bargain for a wise Man? O *that rich Men were wise, that they understand this; that they would consider their latter End!*

What

What hinders then, O my Soul,
but that I may put these Resolutions
of preparing for Death, even now,
into Execution? It will make me me-
lancholy, or, at least disturb my Plea-
sures. It will so, or else where's the
Benefit? But after a little Time,
when Piety is by a constant Course
become more familiar to me, the
Thoughts of Death will then be
sweet, and itself welcome. When
I know myself prepared to enter into
my Master's Joy, I shall daily pant
after my Change, and be ever ready
to say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy Ser-
vant depart in Peace, that mine Eyes
may see thy Salvation!* What then
can hinder me? 'Tis Time enough:
But am I sure of that? and if not,
is it the Part of a wise Man to ven-
ture the Loss of Heaven upon Un-
certainties? I have now Time, but
shall I always have it? God calls me
now, shall I trifle with him, and
boldly tell him, since he has given
me Time enough, I'll come at my
Leisure? God knows, the Question
is not when shall I die? but if it hap-
pen now, even whilst I am reading,
am

am I now ready for it? The Wretch whom but now I visited, was undone (I heard him say so) by intending to repent. He had, he knew, a Part to act, and he put it off till his Taper was expiring, and then, Lord! what a sad Epilogue did he make? O! how he went trembling off the Stage!

The PRAYER.

O GOD, thou great Redeemer of the World, who by thy Resurrection didst triumph over Death, suffer it not to arrest me unawares; but grant that I may live in a continual Expectation of it, and so be prepared, not only to meet it, but even to bid it welcome, and receive it as a joyful Messenger, sent to let me into thy Palace, and crown me with Life eternal. I am now, O God, resolved upon a daily Contemplation of my last Hour, and humbly implore thy Grace to enable me to live as I shall then wish I had done. Thou hast thought fit to conceal the Hour from me; let me live

live then as if it were this Hour, even whilst I am offering up this Prayer at thy Throne. O that when it comes, it may find me so doing! The Apprehensions of Death are very dreadful to the Wicked, that are not ready for it, and its Agonies are feared even by the Righteous. Be thou then, O Lord, my Support in that Hour of Trial, and let a firm and well-grounded Hope be my Refuge against the Sting of Death, and thy Mercy my Shield against the Terrors of it. Thou hast given me the Day of Life, to do the great Work of my Salvation; and therefore suffer me not foolishly to delay it, till the Night of Death comes, when no Man can work. I beseech thee, grant that I may not only busy my Time in contriving how to settle my Abode, and fix my Habitation in the World, since I know that I am hastening away, and that the End of my Journey will likewise put an End to all my Designs. I am travelling to *Canaan*: O let me not set my Heart so much upon the Wilderness, as to forget the Promised Land,

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Land, and lose my Hopes of entering into thy Rest. But grant, that through the Holiness of my Life, and a daily Prospect of my Death, I may passionately wish for that happy Hour, and meet it at last with the earnest Prayer of thy beloved Apostle, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Amen.

A consolatory penitential Meditation upon the Merits of Christ's Sufferings, translated from the Latin of St Gerard's.

THE Reproach of the Cross is the Glory of the Christian; and the Rest of the humble Soul consists in the bleeding Wounds of a crucified Saviour. Our truest Life depends upon his Death, and our highest Honour in his Exaltation. O heavenly Father, O God omnipotent, how infinite is thy Mercy! how transcendent thy Goodness! 'Twas owing to myself, that I have offended thee; 'tis owing to thyself, that thou wilt accept of an Atonement, and admit of a Reconciliation,
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by the *mediational* Satisfaction of my Saviour.

Vouchsafe therefore, O God, to cast thine Eyes upon the Sacrifice of his Flesh, that so thou mayest remit the Guilt that proceeds from the Depravity of my own. Regard, I beseech thee, the Sufferings of thy beloved Son, and forget the Miscarriages of me, thy unworthy Servant. My stubborn Flesh has indeed provoked thine Anger! but, oh, let the *expiatory* Sacrifice of thy Son's Blood melt thee into Pity. Much, I confess, my Iniquities have deserved; but much more has my Redeemer's Righteousness merited for me, and the Innocence of his Life satisfied for the Guilt of mine. For by how much greater is God than Man, by so much does his Goodness exceed the Bulk of Wickedness. Since the Whole of my being is thine by Right of Creation, grant that it may be thine also by Right of Affection. Thou hast allowed me the Privilege of Asking, give me also the Benefit of Receiving, Thou hast commanded me to *seek*; grant that I may *find*. Thou directest.

directest me to *knock*, *open* to me that now do. For thee I receive the Will to desire ; permit me I beseech thee, to obtain the Blessing I ask. O righteous God ! O most just Judge ! if I conceal my Transgressions, they will be utterly incurable ; and if I bring them to Light, they are altogether abominable ; they overwhelm me with Sorrow, when I reflect upon their Nature ; and they fill me with Fear, when I consider their End : But do not, I beseech thee, restrain thy Mercy, where the Misery is confess'd to be so inexpressibly great ; and by how much the sorer the *Burthen* of my *Sins* is, by so much the more let me feel the Refreshments of thy *Grace* ; that so the Greatness of thy Supplies may be answerable to the Greatness of my Wants. Holy Father, let me not, I pray thee, feel the Weight of thy Wrath, since thou hast smitten thy Son for my Transgressions : Holy *Jesus*, free me from the Anger of an incensed God, since thou thyself hast bore that very Anger in thy Sufferings on the Cross : Blessed Spirit, shield

shield me, by the invisible Aid of thy ghostly Consolation, against the Displeasure of my God, since thou hast promised in the Gospel, *Mercy* to the *Penitent*, and *Rest* to the *weary* and *heavy-laden* Sinner. Holy God, and my most righteous Judge, I have no Place to fly to, where I may avoid thy Presence, or shelter myself from the Reach of thy Vengeance. *If I go up into Heaven, thou art there : If I go down into Hell, thou art there also : If I take the Wings of the Morning, and remain in the uttermost Parts of the Sea, even there shall thy Hand lead me, and thy Right Hand shall hold me.*

To Christ then will I fly, and in his salutary Wounds will I shelter myself; and therefore, O merciful God, look upon the mangled, wounded Body of thy Son, and, in that, forget those Wounds that my Sins have made in me. Let thy Son's Blood cleanse me from all Unrighteousness, and vouchsafe, I beseech thee, to look upon me through that very Son of thy Love : Regard those passionate Prayers he poured out upon
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the Cross, and accept those powerful Intercessions that he offered up for all penitent Sinners.

Most holy Lord! most omnipotent Judge! when I reflect upon my Life, I am terrified with the Reflection: For when I view it all over, I find, upon the strictest Search I am able to make, that it is nothing but Corruption, or, at best, but a void and unprofitable Waste; or if there be any Appearance of Fruitfulness in it, it is either so counterfeit or defective, or one Way or other attended with such a sensible Mixture of the Corruptible, that it cannot be pleasing, if not indeed, altogether displeasing in thy Sight: So that I must be forced to conclude, that my whole Life is sinful; and, upon that Account, subject to a State of Damnation; or else unprofitable, and so not to be valued at the best. Nay, why do I separate the Unprofitable, from the Damnable? since if it be the First, it cannot escape the Rigour of the Last; it being so peremptorily declared in the Gospel, *That every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit,*

Fruit, is cast into the Fire ; and not only that Tree which bringeth forth evil Fruit, but even that which bears none at all, is like to meet with the same fatal Conclusion.

The Instance of the Goats, placed at the Left Hand of the Judge, fills me with Terror, when I consider they underwent that Doom, not merely because they had done wickedly, but because they neglected to do good. 'Twas because they neither fed the Hungry, nor satisfied the Thirsty ; neither cloathed the Naked, nor visited the Sick : And therefore, when from hence I proceed to look into myself, what sad Reproach and Self-condemnation must I be filled with, and take upon myself this just Complaint ! O thou dry and barren Wood, fit only for the Fuel of unquenchable Fire, what wilt thou answer for thyself in that Day, when every minute Part of thy Life shall be weighed in the Balance of an impartial Justice, and a strict Enquiry made how it has been spent ? *when not a Hair of your Head shall fall to the Ground, nor a Moment of thy Time be unaccount-*
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ed for ? O dreadful Strait ! O Anguish insupportable ! On the one Hand, my Sins accusing ; on the other, Justice terrifying ! Beneath a gaping Hell, an infernal Lake, ready to devour me ! Above me, an angry God, ready to pass Sentence ! Within me, the hidden Remorse of a self-accusing Conscience ! Round about me, the material World melting into a liquid Conflagration ! And in these Circumstances, if the *Righteous shall scarcely be saved*, where shall the *Sinner*, taken unprepared and laden with Guilt, *be able to appear* ? 'Twill be impossible to be concealed ; and yet to appear, will be altogether intolerable. And now in these great Exigencies, and Extremities of Nature, where can I look for Help ? or what Salvation can I expect for my sinking Soul ? What Counsel shall I take ? what Direction shall I follow ? Who, or where is he, that is by Way of Eminence and Distinction stiled the Guardian Angel, the Almighty Saviour ? 'Tis *Jesus*, my Judge, even within whose Arms I tremble.

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But take Heart, O my Soul, and do not quite despair: Hope in him whom thou fearest; fly to him from whom thou hast fled; and whilst thou art yet in the Way, be reconciled to thy dear Redeemer. Blessed *Jesu!* according to thy Name, so be thy Mercy. Look upon me, a miserable Supplicant at the Throne of thy Grace, who will not cease to call upon thy Name, wherein is Salvation. If thou wilt vouchsafe to receive me into thy Arms, I know they will not be the straightner for thy Acceptance of me; nor thy Bowels e'er the more contracted for my Admittance into them. I confess, O my God, that I have deserved Damnation, nor can any Repentance of mine make the least Atonement or Compensation for my Sins: But then I know withal, that thy *Mercy is infinite*, and therefore can surmount my foulest Offences, and my greatest Provocations. *In thee, O Lord, is my Confidence; and therefore I beseech thee, not to cast me from thy Presence, and so shall I not perish for ever.*

Of the Benefits of our Lord's Passion. From the Latin.

AS often as I fix my Contemplations upon the Sufferings of our Lord, so often do I entertain great Things, both with Respect to the Love of my God, and the Pardon of my Sins. Nay, the very Circumstances of my Saviour's Death, are lively Emblems of his Mercy: Insomuch, that when I behold his Head reclining on the Cross, methinks I see him ready to salute me. When I view his wide expanded Arms, they seem to me as in a Posture to embrace me. His open Hands are Representations of the Benefits he is ready to bestow upon me; and his gaping Side loudly speaks the Ardour of his Love. He is therefore lifted up on high, that he may draw all Men to himself; and his Wounds streamed out with Blood, that we Sinners might partake of the Fountains of living Waters. They look black indeed, with Anguish, but they shine

shine bright in Love; and through the Opening of his Wounds we have Access to the Secrets of his Heart; and the Plenty of *livid* Gore, plainly shews us, that with him there's plenteous Redemption. As the Grape that is pressed in the Wine-press, diffuses its Justice in abundance, so the Flesh of Christ, labouring under the Weight of divine Wrath, and the heavy Burthen of our Sins, sheds forth plenty of Blood to heal our Stripes, and to divert the Infliction of an offended Justice. When *Abraham* was about to offer up his Son in Sacrifice to the Lord, the Lord said, *Now know I that thou lovest me, seeing thou hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son, from me.* And thou in like Manner, O my Soul, must forever acknowledge the unspeakable Love of thy eternal Father, since he has not *spared his own Son*, but freely gave him up for us all: So that while we were yet Sinners, we were reconciled unto God by the Death of his Son. Is it possible then that he should ever forget us, while he looks upon us through the Son of his

Love? Nay, can he ever forget that precious Pledge of his Son's Love, the Ransom of his Blood, when he tells us, *That he puts our Tears into his Bottle, and orders every good Man's Goings?* Or can Christ, the Saviour of the World, be ever unmindful of those for whom he *lives for ever* to make *Intercession*, and for whom he did vouchsafe to *die*? Can he be ever forgetful of those in Heaven, for whose Sake he endured such inexpressible Tortures upon Earth?

Consider then, O my Soul, that great Variety of ineffable Advantages that accrue to thee upon the very Score of thy Saviour's Sufferings. Christ, our compassionate High Priest, sweat great Drops of Blood for us in his Agony in the Garden, to prevent our being over-whelm'd with cold despairing Sweats in the Hour of Death. He spontaneously contended with all the formidable Artilleries of Death, that he might save us from the unexpressible Miseries of *eternal Death*, when we are contending with the last Agonies of a temporal one. *His Soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto*

unto Death, that we might live with him in Heaven, and be crowned with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. He suffered himself to be betrayed by a Kiss, which is the Pledge of Love, and the Token of Affection, that he might cancel that Guilt which the *Devil* had brought upon our first Parents, under the Shew of officious Counsel, and the specious Appearance of a singular Kindness. He submitted himself to be taken and bound, and led away as a Malefactor, on purpose to release us from the Chains of *Satan*, and free us from the Misery of an everlasting Captivity. He chose to enter upon his Passion in the Garden, that he might expiate that original Sin that was contracted in the Garden. He was strengthened by an Angel, that he might make us Angelical, and rank us among the Number of the Sons of God. He was forsaken by his Disciples, that we might, even after our shameful Relapse into Sin, be again reconciled to God. He was accused by false Witnesses, before the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, to prevent *Satan's* accusing

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cusing us before God's Tribunal. He was condemned on Earth, that we might be acquitted in Heaven; when he was accused before *Pontius Pilate* as guilty, who never knew Sin, he was *silent*, and *opened not his Mouth*, to the Intent that we might not be found *dumb* and *speechless*, and utterly inexcusable, by reason of our Sins, when we also shall be summon'd to appear before the Bar of God's Justice. He was buffeted by the rude Rabble, and underwent cruel Mockings, that we might be acquitted from the Lashes of Conscience, and the Buffetings of *Satan*, and so disappoint the Malice of that subtil Adversary, that lies in wait to deceive. His Face was covered and blindfolded, that he might take away the Veil of Sin, which intercepts the Sight of God from us, and is the fatal Cause of that inexcusable Ignorance which leads to a State of eternal Darkness. He was cloathed with external Vestments, that we might be cloathed with that Robe of Righteousness, and inward Purity, which we had lost by our Transgressions.

He

He was torn with Thorns and cruel Scourges, that he might heal our Grievs, and carry our Sorrows. He bore the dolorous Weight of the Cross, that he might take off the heavy Burthen of that eternal Punishment, which was the Desert of our Sin. He thirsted on the Cross, that we might be cheared with the refreshing Dew of divine Grace, and be kept from coming into that *Place of Torments*, where we shall in vain call for a *Drop of Water* to cool our *parched Tongues*. He endured the incensed Wrath of an angry God, that he might rescue us from those devouring Flames, which cannot be quenched. He cried out for Grief, and very Bitterness of Soul, on purpose to save us from eternal Weeping, Wailing, and gnashing of Teeth. He shed plenty of Tears, that he might wipe off all Tears from our Eyes; and, at last, closed his Eyes in Death, that we might awake to Righteousness, and enjoy the Light of everlasting Life.

Take Courage then, O my Soul,
and do not either forget the Benefits,
or

or cast off thy humble Confidence in thy adorable Redeemer: For though thou hast offended against an infinite Goodness, yet remember, that an infinite Price is paid down for the Offence. Thou art, indeed, to be judged for thy Iniquities, but he that bore the Iniquities of us all, has himself already been judged. If then thy Sins deserve Punishment, remember that God has punished them in his Son. If thy Wounds are great and many, yet they are not so numerous or incurable, but that they may be cancelled and healed by the precious Balsam of the Blood of Christ. *Moses*, indeed, has pronounced a Curse upon thee, for not observing all things that were written in the Book of the Law; but Christ is become a Curse for thee, and the Hand-writing that was against thee, is nailed to the Cross, and blotted out by the Laver of thy Saviour's Blood. Most justly therefore, sweet *Jesus*! may I look upon thy Passion and Death, as the last best Refuge of my depending Soul.

Gloria Deo.

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